THE JOURNAL OF
LIBERTARIAN STUDIES
AN INTERDISCIPLINARY QUARTERLY REVIEW

SYMPOSIUM: IDEOLOGY, ACTION, AND THE PROPER ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

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Monarchy and War

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MONARCHY AND WAR

Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn*

Modern history is nothing but an inventory of bankruptcy declarations.
—Nicolas Gomez Davila

I

Monarchy is a form of government not well understood in North America. To many people in that part of the world, monarchy seems to be a totally obsolete, even childish, institution. The surviving monarchies, after all, might still play a symbolic or even a psychological role, but not a decisive political role.

As a rationalist and a liberal (in the worldwide sense rather than in the American sense), I am also a monarchist who realizes that monarchy, combined with Christianity and Antiquity, was responsible for the rise and flowering of Western civilization, which is slowly assuming an almost global character. Yet, the modern mind is political rather than historical, and therefore is hopelessly tied to the spirit of his time. As Goethe wrote:

> He who cannot give account
> Of the last three thousand years
> Rests in darkness inexperienced
> though he lives from day to day.

Such a person, intellectually nurtured by the boob-tube and newspapers, would be greatly surprised to hear British Prime Minister Disraeli say:

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> The tendency of an advanced civilization is in truth Monarchy. Monarchy is indeed a government which requires a high degree of civilization for its full development. . . . An educated nation recoils from the imperfect vicariate of what is called a representative government.[1]

Democracy is, after all, the oldest form of government in which majorities rule over minorities.[2]

Democracy reappeared in a more civilized form in Athens, but when, in a truly political trial, Socrates praised monarchy, he was condemned to death.[3] Remember also that Madariaga said rightly that our civilization rests on the death of two persons: a philosopher and the Son of God, both victims of the popular will. No wonder that Plato, Socrates's follower, and Aristotle, Plato's disciple, were fierce mon-archists, and that the latter, when democracy returned to Athens, went into exile to avoid Socrates's fate.[4] Plato's thesis that democracy naturally evolves into tyranny was also adopted by Polybius, who believed in an *anakyklosis*, a natural circular evolutionary process from monarchy into aristocracy, aristocracy into democracy, and democracy into tyranny. Indeed, reading Plato's *Republic*, Books VIII–IX, one gets an exact description of the transition from the Weimar Republic to National Socialist tyranny.

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[1]See Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, K.G., *Coningsby;or, The New Generation* (London: Longmans, Green, 1849), book V, ch. 8.

[2]It is still preserved by aboriginies in various parts of the globe. You can find the name of the ethnologists who have studied this phenomenon in some of my books. See, e.g., Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Liberty or Equality?* (Front Royal: Christendom Press, 1993), p. 314 n. 474.

[3]The political aspects of the death of Socrates can be found in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in the 1911 as well as in the most recent edition. Other authors are mentioned in Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism Revisited* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 1989), p. 349 n. 47. Recently, I. F. Stone dealt with the same subject from a leftist point of view in *The Trial of Socrates* (New York: Anchor Books, 1989). According to Stone, Socrates was a "fascist."

[4]In accordance with these leading philosophers of antiquity, Thomas Aquinas maintained that democracy was the least bad of the three evil forms of government. Ochlocracy and tyranny, he argued, were worse.

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The historically conscious observer realizes not only that countries like Great Britain, Spain, and the Netherlands, which today are monarchies, went through republican periods, but also that Greece and Mexico, today republics, have already been monarchies twice. Still, the most "educational" case is that of Rome. If we had the opportunity, given our knowledge of history, to meet a Roman citizen in the sixtieth year before Christ, and told him that his country would soon become a monarchy, he certainly would have reacted most vigorously, blaming us for ignoring Roman tradition and mentality. Monarchy? A return to the authoritarianism of Tarquinius Superbus? Out of the question! Yet, Caesar already loomed beyond the horizon.

Subsequently, if we had the chance to meet with one of his descendants in the year 260 after Christ and told him of his ancestor's indignation about our naiveté and arrogance, he certainly would have shrugged his shoulders. "And now?" we might ask. "Now? We are still a republic. Look at signs everywhere declaring SENATUS POPULESQUE ROMANUS! A monarchy? As among Orientals and barbarians? Out of the question!" "But you have an Emperor!" "Ha ha! *Imperator* means general and there always have been generals in republics!" Yet, a few years later, Diocletian, the *Imperator Augustus*, had a golden crown put on his head and demanded *proskynesis*, the kneeling approach to his person. Then, even the most stupid Romans realized that the republic had gone the way of all flesh. Tacitus, indeed, had suspected it long before.

There are still outstanding thinkers who have a deep respect for the monarchical order, for rational as well as sentimental motives. Yet, even the rationalist has to take the psychological factor into account, or he would cease to be a realistic rationalist. As a matter of fact, the increasing democratization of Western civilization has fostered monarchophile thinking, although only on a high level. Thus, it is not surprising that Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism, declared monarchy the best form of government, but, since no descendants of David survived, the aristocratic constitution of Venice should be studied in the planning of a Jewish State, whereas

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democracy, as the worst type of rule, was to be strictly avoided.[5] History is already telling us how right he was.

This introduction is necessary to understand the relationship between monarchy and war, and between monarchy and warfare. However, we are limiting ourselves here to the Christian monarchy in our civilization, and not discussing some abstract form of monocracy. (Bear in mind that *arche* is not *kratos*.) We must remember the words of Nicolas Gomez Davila, who wrote that without Christianity and Antiquity as their background, Europeans would be nothing but palefaced barbarians.[6] Nor should we forget that war is a calamity to be avoided, one of the many results of our imperfections caused by Original Sin, even if soldiers, by and large, play a positive role in the New Testament. Many of our saints have fought in battles, from St. Francis to St. Ignatius. Still, eliminating, or at least limiting, war should be one of our goals.

II

The First Enlightenment produced the French Revolution, the great historical revival of democracy, a sadistic orgy in which the "Divine Marquis" played a leading role both intellectually and personally.[7] Here is not the place to portray the Revolution's horrors,

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[5]See Theodor Herzl, "Der Judenstaat," *Theodor Herzls zionistische Schriften* (Charlottenburg: Jüdischer Verlag, n.d.), p. 119. Around the year 1000, the Romans investigated whether any descendants of King David were still alive, but found only two old men without issue. Needless to say, most Israelites saw in Jesus not the son of a poor *oikodomos*, but a Prince of Royal blood and pretender to the throne of Israel.

[6]See Nicolas Gomez Davila, *Auf verlorenem Posten* (Vienna: Karolinger, 1992), p. 259; originally published as *Nuevos Escolios a un texto implicito* (Bogota: Nueva Biblioteca Colombiana, 1986).

[7]The Marquis de Sade was held as a prisoner in the Bastille, a partly luxurious jail for criminal noblemen, until July 4, 1789, by a royal *lettre de cachet* upon the behest of his mother-in-law (largely for cruelties to his wife). There, using a funnel, he incited the population in the quarter to liberate "innocent prisoners." The commander of the jail begged Louis XVI to liberate him from this burden, whereupon Sade was transferred to

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which were revealed to a broader public only in the years preceding its 200th anniversary in 1989.[8] But, in order to explain its effects on wars and the methods of warfare, it is necessary to highlight its character and role in history. The French Revolution attempted to bring liberty and equality under a common denominator, something Goethe argued that only charlatans would promise.[9] Equality, indeed, can be established only by way of some form of slavery, just as a hedge can be kept even only by way of constant trimming. In this perverse competition between liberty and equality, the latter naturally won out.

Robespierre, before being dragged to *notre chère mère la guillotine*, had planned to put all Frenchmen into one uniform, and all Frenchwomen into another. He also wanted to eliminate all church steeples as "undemocratic," since they were taller than all other buildings.[10]

Charenton, a jail for the criminally insane. Ten days later, on July 14, the Bastille was stormed, and Sade was released from Charenton and became known as "Citizen Brutus Sade," commander of a *Section des Piques* (some sort of democratic SS). Sade was a very active revolutionary who boasted of the role he had played in the fall of the Bastille. It is no wonder that he became a cult figure to the students in 1968. See Gilbert Lely, *Vie du Marquis de Sade*, vol. 1 (Paris: Gallimard NFR, 1952), p. 273.

[8]See Reynald Secher, *Le genocide franco-francais* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1986). Most amazing was a factory in Pont-de-Cle where book covers and riding breeches were manufactured from the skins of butchered royalists.

[9]Goethe spoke about "*Phantasten und Charlatane*," be they legislators or revolutionaries. See Johann Wofgang von Goethe, *Maximen und Reflexionen*, no. 955 (New York: MacMillan, 1893).

[10]Crane Brinton, *The Jacobins* (New York: MacMillan, 1930). In Strassburg, preparations were underway to destroy the spires of the world famous cathedral. In some villages, the "project" was actually carried out. Since the Alsatians "did not speak the republican language" (i.e., French), plans were made to remedy this lack of "sameness." The proposals were: 1) to take away their children; 2) to disperse the families evenly all over France; or 3) to guillotine them all. This account by Brinton, a Harvard professor, reads like a description of the Third Reich.

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With its ideal of equality, democracy's revival from antiquity was closely connected with "nationalism," a term most Europeans equated with what Americans might call ethnicism (not to be confused with racism, which is not a linguistic-cultural concept but a biological one). The basic drive is the craving for sameness, the twin of equality. (Whatever is the same is also equal, although it is not necessarily true the other way around.) After 1789, differences became suspect, and were to be rejected and eradicated.

The traditional outlook of our culture, indeed, was vertical: God the Father in Heaven, the Holy Father in Rome, the King as the Father of the Fatherland, and the Father as the King in the Family. (In the lands of the Reformation, the monarch, not the Pope, was the head of the Church.) Connected with the Fathers were the Mothers, from the *Regina Coeli* down to the Queens and the various matriarchs.

Following the Revolution, the new order was increasingly flattened until it became horizontal. Of course, the people as such could not rule; rather, majorities could rule over minorities, so numbers assumed immense importance.[11] Even truth became a matter for majorities, so the bigger the majority, the "truer" the right answer. The ideal was the consent, the affirmation by the majority, which in its ultimate form achieves a totality.[12] Hence, we see the totalitarian root of democracy, which stands for the "politization" of the entire people. Even the children, although not allowed to vote, are now educated in that direction.

It was obvious that the new order could tolerate no estates, and, soon, the demand arose to eliminate social differences based on wealth and income, as well as those based on birth. In 1794, the popular ire also turned against the rich, and some were guillotined for just that reason. Needless to say, the new horizontalism was in

[11]In this sense, one has to understand the statement of Jorge Louis Borges: "Yo descreo en la democracia porque es un abuso curioso de la estadistica."
[12]In the German elections of 1932, about 98 percent of the voting public went to the polls. The totalitarian powers later "produced" numbers approaching 100 percent, but they still loved, very democratically, to stage "plebiscites."

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conflict with the Christian tradition, which emphatically does not stand for equality.[13]

In the French schoolbooks, one can read "*La terreur était terrible, mais grande* (the Terror was terrible, but great)," which, in view of our bottomless human stupidity, one might some day even say about German National Socialism and Russian International Socialism. Most of our contemporaries assume that the victims of the guillotine were largely degenerate aristocrats,[14] and that the final benefits of the Revolution were greater than the damages or losses the French suffered. Yet, only a few years before the celebration of its 200th anniversary in 1989, a flood of well-documented books came out which tore the mask away from the face of that godless event. Already in 1986, French Deputy Bernard Antony warned the European Parliament in Strassburg not to celebrate 1789, since it had bred National and International Socialism.[15] At about the same time came the revelations of Francois Furet, Simon Schama, and, above all, Reynald Secher, about whose terrifying volume Professor Jean Meyer wrote that the worst and most nauseating atrocities could not even be mentioned.[16]

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[13]It is most amazing that one encounters fairly well-educated Christians who believe that "we are all equal before God." If Judas Iskariot were equal to John the Baptist or John the Evangelist, Christianity would have to close shop. Dominican R.L. Bruckberger said rightly that the New Testament is a message of human inequality. (Could one imagine that, at the Day of Judgment, all sentences could be identical? That God would not "discriminate" between saints and sinners?)

[14]Of those condemned to death by the "courts" and usually guillotined, only 8 percent belonged to the nobility. Farmers represented the largest share, at 32 percent. We have no exact data about the number of victims in the larger slaughters, above all in the Vendée, Britanny, Lyon, Toulon, Bordeaux, and Marseilles. Mass slaughters also took place in monasteries and convents. The estimates run between 120,000 and 250,000.

[15]Goebbels insisted that the German Revolution was a counterpart to the French Revolution. The Soviets renamed battleships they took over from the old regime *Danton* and *Marat*.

[16]There were forerunners to the publications of Secher, Furet, and Schama, authors like Cabanes & Nass and Jacques Cretineau-Joly, who told us

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We are told that in this sadistic orgy, pregnant women were squeezed out in fruit- and wine-presses, mothers and their children were slowly roasted to death in bakers' ovens, and women's genitals were filled with gun-powder and brought to explosion. We cannot continue to dwell on these unspeakable horrors, and should not be surprised that Sade was invoked, since his pornographic writings contain long philosophical and antireligious passages. The infamies and cruelties of the French Revolution were of such a low nature that the National and International Socialists seem humanitarians in comparison.[17] The 1989 celebrations of the French Revolution concentrated unilaterally on the "Declaration of Human Rights" (in the shadow of the Guillotine), and did not even mention the fall of the Bastille with its most unsavory details.[18]

The invention of the guillotine was psychologically a step in the "new direction": the mechanization of swift murder. Yet, the French Revolution left behind something much worse than the guillotine, because it was permanent: a radical change in the nature of wars, which made this human calamity still more extensive, as well as intensive—*la levée des masses*, conscription.

III

The social pyramid in the new horizontalism was now upturned, and quantity, not quality, had its day. Everybody had the same rights —a truly microscopic share in decisions, effective only *if* it were

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how the genitals of the Princess de Lamballe were carried in triumph through the streets of Paris, and how a cook's apprentice was covered with butter and roasted alive after the storming of the Tuileries. The enthusiasm for equality had frightening consequences.

[17]In the number of victims, however, the French Revolution could not beat the National and International Socialists, since the world has technically "progressed" after 1789, and now offers greater possibilities for mass murder.

[18]The defenders of the Bastille were invalids and Swiss mercenaries. They had been promised freedom if they surrendered, but the mob killed without pity, while a young butcher *qui savait faire les viandes* was fetched to sever the head of Governor de Launay. The seven minor criminals were set free.

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part of a majority—but also the same obligations. One could vote for a representative, but, in turn, a male had the duty to defend his country (or to participate in its aggressions), which might mean drudgery in barracks, captivity, wounds, mutilation, or even death, a bad deal indeed. The draftee almost ceased to be a real person as he was dragged out of his privacy and became an "individual," the meaning of which is only the last indivisible part of a collective whole.[19] Hippolyte Taine described the results of this return to the stage of primitive tribes with these ringing words, taken from his *Origines de la France contemporaine*:

> One puts in the hands of each adult a ballot, but on the back of each soldier a knapsack: with what promises of massacre and bankruptcy for the Twentieth Century, with what exasperation of ill will and distrust, with what loss of wholesome effort, by what a perversion of productive discoveries, accompanied by what an improvement in the means of destruction, by what recoil toward the inferior and unhealthy forms of the old combative societies, by what a backward step toward egoistic and brutal instincts, toward the sentiments, manner and morality of ancient cities and barbaric tribes, we know all too well.[20]

One of the most immediate and degrading consequences of general military service in time of war was the "indoctrination" of the draftees. They were in the vast majority innocent, and largely even unwilling, civilians whose enthusiasm for fighting and killing was limited. They were, therefore, taught to *hate* the enemy, degraded to the point of wickedness, and stripped of all virtue. This had been different in previous ages when soldiers were men—gentlemen as well as ruffians—who loved to fight and offered their services to anybody who led and paid them well. Prince Eugene of Savoy had vainly offered his services to France, but ended up as the glorious

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[19]The word "person" comes from the Etruscan *phersú*, the mask actors wore which determined their (intransferable) role on the stage. It is significant that *individu* is in French a term of abuse.

[20]Cited in Hoffman Nickerson, *The Armed Horde, 1793–1939: A Study of the Rise, Survival, and Decline of the Mass Army* (New York: G. Putnam's Sons, 1940).

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military hero of the Habsburgs. The same happened finally to Baron Gideon Loudon (Laudon), born in Livonia, but of Scottish origin, whose father was an officer in the Swedish services. Loudon, however, served first in the Russian Army, and then offered his experience to Frederick II of Prussia. Rebuffed, Loudon joined the largely Austrian army of the Holy Roman Emperor, and defeated Frederick in battle.[21]

As late as the mid-nineteenth century, the vast majority of "recruits" had scant education (mass illiteracy prevailed for generations), and had to serve long stretches in the army, frequently three, sometimes four years. Those who had bachelor's degrees (aged 18 to 19 years) served only one year, received a commission, and became reserve officers. The idea was to have trained soldiers under arms, as well as in a reserve capacity, periodically called to maneuvers. The loss of time for all was considerable.

Yet if one major power adopted that system, it forced other countries on the same continent, to keep from being outnumbered, to do exactly the same. And since the European monarchies had painfully experienced the numerical superiority of the French armies in the Napoleonic wars, and, as "constitutional" monarchies, were drifting into the democratic cauldron, they too were now victims of a phenomenon called "militarism," resulting in the "Armed Horde." England, relying on its "splendid isolation," was an exception to the rule, but the United States, politically already a victim of the "French School," during the War Between the States drafted not only its citizens but also foreigners on its soil. Although they could not vote, they earned money; thus, cash was redeemed with blood. Voluntary military service, however, is a different matter. On a lower level, it might rely on the desire to fight,[22] on a higher

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[21]Bismarck, who was Prussian Ambassador in St. Petersburg, was offered a Russian career by Nicholas I, but rejected the offer. Yet, the Portuguese ambassador in Berlin, Count Joaquin Oriola, transferred to the Prussian civil service. It was perfectly all right to choose one's employer inside or outside one's own country.

[22]See Nickerson, *The Armed Horde*, p. 15.

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one the fascination of army life,[23] and on the highest the wish to defend one's country or bring to life a great ideal.[24]

In the book from which we quoted Taine, American author Hoffman Nickerson writes:

> During the last century-and-a-half, civilization has recreated the armed horde. Previously a rarity, it has become the accepted instrument of any great military effort. It has not, however, come alone. Exactly a hundred fifty years ago in 1789—shortly after the United States had sought to protect themselves against democracy by their Federal Constitution—the French Revolution began. From that time to our day, democratic ideas have come to dominate politics just as the mass army has dominated war. It is the thesis of this book that the two are inseparably connected with each other and with a third thing, barbarism.[25]

IV

The fact that the monarchs appeared in military uniforms and figured prominently as heads of the army also symbolized the nineteenth century compromise of monarchy with democracy. The horizontal–identarian order assumed an increasingly "national" character, and the general tendency moved toward the ethnically

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[23]The Irish in New York revolted against this (draft) regulation. Popular indignation turned against them as embodiments of "Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion." Still, in 1935, I met in London an Englishman who had served in the Prussian Army in World War I. His boyish "dream" was to become an actor or a Prussian officer. His father rejected both careers, but then they found out that a foreigner could be accepted by the Prussian Army. So he became an officer, and he faithfully served William II after the war broke out, but only on the Eastern front. In August, 1914, he considered that the army oath he had solemnly given was more significant than his nationality. Yet, he despised the Nazis, and, under great difficulties, worked his way back to Britain without being tried for treason.

[24]In the Spanish Civil War, there were idealistic volunteers from foreign countries on both sides. Among the Nationalists, I encountered French and Irish.

[25] Nickerson, *The Armed Horde*, p. 14.

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unified state. We faced "Pan-Germanism," "Pan-Italianism" (the *Risorgimento* movement), even "Pan-Slavism," which transcended "minor" ethnic boundaries.[26]

Hand in hand with this evolution, we see in the Germanic and Slavic areas the rise of collective gymnastic movements, cultivating a violent nationalistic spirit and manifesting itself in gigantic "synchronized" performances.[27] This physical training also implied a paramilitary aim to impress the public with numbers.[28] Undoubtedly, we have here one of the psychological roots of national socialism. The Communists, too, loved synchronized, uniformed, mass performances. Horizontalism asserted itself visually.

This is part of the nineteenth century's still "mixed" transformation. The new ideal, the ethnically uniform state, is more in harmony with militarization and for the development of parliamentary institutions than is the ethnically mixed state. Mark Twain has given us an account of parliamentary life in Vienna,[29] and John Stuart

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[26]During the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Reformation in Wittenberg Castle, pan-Germanist students added the red of the Revolution to the black-golden Imperial flag.

[27]Friedrich Ludwig Jahn spent a few years in a fortress as a "demagogue." He visited Paris in 1814 dressed in an "Old Germanic" fantasy costume, pushed passers-by from the sidewalks, finally climbed the Arc de Triomph, and tried to wrestle the tuba from the hands of the angel. Miroslav Tyrš (Tiersch) founded the radically anti-Habsburg and anti-German *Sokol* (Falcon) gymnastic move-ment patterned after Jahn's *Turnerbund*. The crowds adore masses in motion.

[28]In democracies, which worship numbers, smallness is seemingly a great handicap. Jacob Burckhardt said in 1866 that "The despair in everything small is a serious evil in every respect. He who does not belong to a nation of thirty millions cries: 'Help us, oh Lord, we are drowning!' The philistine wants to eat from a big kettle with diabolical determination or it does not taste well to him." See Emil Duerr, *Freiheit und Macht bei Jacob Burckhardt* (Basel: Helbing & Lichtental, 1918). Here are some of the roots of Pan-Slavism and Pan-Germanism.

[29]Mark Twain described the hopeless situation in the Austrian Parliament, which he visited in 1897, in his "Traveller's Record," which appeared periodically in *Harper's Magazine*.

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Mill has insisted that democracy is problematic in a multilingual state[30]—no wonder, since totalitarian institutions need linguistic uniformity. Added to this is the fact that the ethnic majority, through its party (or parties), seeks to rule democratically, but not in a liberal way, over the minorities.

Multilinguality creates enormous difficulties in a parliament as well as in an army. Hence, we observe the hostility of the French Revolution toward the use of non-French languages in the Republic. The rise of democracy and of ethnic nationalism went in synchromesh. These two horizontal mass movements easily combined in the name of the *demos*. It is significant that the armed forces of the red "German Democratic Republic" were the conscripted and ideologically drilled *Nationale Volksarmee*, the "National People's Army," in whose name the term "people" appears in two forms. Yet, when the monarchist nobleman Charles de Gaulle proposed to the Socialist Léon Blum to transform the French Army into an *armée du métier*, a purely professional army consisting of volunteers, his plan was immediately rejected as a rightist undemocratic trick. Such an army could be easily mobilized against the people, and might develop an *esprit de corps*, which would be fully "undemocratic."

V

We spoke already about the indoctrination of draftees, which, naturally, becomes important in a time of war. An even greater evil is the fact that, since the recruits are taken from the population at large, the *people itself* has to be indoctrinated, in other words, made to hate the enemy collectively. For this purpose, modern governments invoke the support of the mass media, which then inform the populace about the evil of the enemy (with little or no regard for the truth). The attack stresses the wickedness and inferiority of

[30]John Stuart Mill declared it very simply: "Free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities." *Considerations on Representative Government* (New York: H. Holt, 1882), p. 310. Switzerland is very much an exception to the rule, as the Swiss feel an overpowering Helvetic loyalty far above their ethnic ties.

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the hostile nation and the evil deeds committed by its armed forces, which consists of cowards, a low breed recruited from a fiendish people.

In the First World War, the Western Allies, being more democratic, were also more skilled in organizing collective hatreds. Taking advantage of the stupidity of the masses (everywhere!), they could print almost anything, and even the silliest accounts, for instance that German soldiers cut off the hands of Belgian babies, were readily believed.

Louis Raemaekers, a Dutchman in the service of the Allies, produced incredibly nauseating etchings depicting atrocities committed by the German Army. One of the worst showed a naked French girl crucified and spat upon by bespectacled, unshaven German soldiers. Nothing like it was manufactured by the Central Powers.[31]

In a memorable book, Georges Bernanos described the idiocies of French war propaganda of the period. According to Bernanos, the French were told that the German bodies on the battlefield had a worse stench than those of the French, and that the Germans were ridiculous cowards who would not dare to interrupt the cozy life of the French *poilus* in their trenches. It was deceitful propaganda of the worst kind.[32] (Yet, during the French mutinies in 1917, entire

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[31]There were also hate-expressions current among the people of the Central Powers like the hate-poem of Ernst Lissauer. Slogans like *Gott strafe England*! (God punish England!) and *Serbien muss sterbien!* (Serbia must die!) were frequently repeated, but nobody invented such nonsense as calling Sauerkraut "Liberty Cabbage" or German Shepherd dogs "Alsatians." In England, people even burned German pianos, and put badger dogs to sleep to prevent their torture by children. In the United States, teachers stopped teaching German. Those who taught German enjoyed a sabbatical, and then had to teach Spanish.

[32]See Georges Bernanos, *La grande peur des bien-pensants* (Paris: Grasset, 1949), pp. 414–18. Bernanos, a devout Catholic and monarchist, characterized World War I (in which he had partipated as a soldier), as "That famous, pitiless war of the pacifist and humanitarian democracies."

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batallions were decimated, i.e., every 10th man was executed. The war, therefore, was not so entertaining or cozy at all.)

Naturally, World War I was no longer a cabinet-war between monarchs, but already what the Germans called a *Völkerringen*, a war between nations, at least up to 1917, when the Russian monarchy fell and made America's entry politically feasible. Then it became an ideological crusade "to make the world safe for democracy," as had happened at the end of the eighteenth century, when France challenged Europe ideologically.

It was interesting to see how the tensions were different on the two fronts, East and West. In the East, until 1917, it was still a fight among three emperors, which was the reason why the old style there somehow survived and continued on a higher level. It was still a war between gentlemen,[33] a fact evident not only at the front, but also evident in the homelands. In Russia, craftsmen and tradesmen among the prisoners were often released and, until the Bolsheviks took over, they earned money very nicely. "Enemy Aliens" were jailed in Britain, France, Italy, and Germany, but not in Austria.[34]

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[33]Aviators in the West, frequently engaged in personal duels in the sky, were still fighting a gentlemen's war. Fritz Reck-Malleczewen (who died in the Dachau concentration camp) described the despair of a German uhlan piercing to death a Russian horseman with his lance. Weeping, he knelt before the dying man, who forgave him. Solzhenitsyn, on the other hand, mentioned cossacks who happened to venture upon a car with German generals without molesting them. They explained afterwards, "This was just an accident. It was not planned!" When the Austrians reconquered Lemberg (Lwow), they found in an apartment deserted by Russian occupants a list of damaged objects, and money to cover their repair. This was different in World War II. By that time, the majority of the Soviet soldiers were literate, had "progressed," were "enlightened," and behaved worse than gorillas—more than 2 million cases of rape, even in liberated areas!

[34]On the concept and treatment of "enemy aliens," see Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, vol. 4 (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), pp. 160–62. Organized hatred against "enemy aliens" also led to mob hostilities. Thus, the "patriotric" *canaille* of St. Petersburg burnt down the German Embassy after the outbreak of the First World War, but more or less

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VI

A war between entire nations developing into an ideological crusade—the word "crusade" has near-religious implications—was bound to assume total and totalitarian features.[35] The totalitarians

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the same people, about three years later, were instrumental in staging the "Red October" Bolshevik revolution.

Of gentlemen in that war, one got a good account in the 1937 Stroheim and Gabin film *La grande illusion*. The title was most fitting in light of the events which took place after September 1, 1939. This film, showing French airmen downed by Germans and hosted by them afterwards, reminds us of Caulaincourt's story about a Baron Wintzigerode who, wearing a long cloak over his Russian uniform, interrogated a French soldier standing guard in front of a camp near Moscow in 1812. Stopped and arrested by a French officer, he was brought before Napoleon, who discovered that he was a subject of his brother Jerôme, King of Westphalia. The upstart Corsican lost his temper, menaced Wintzigerode with execution as a spy, and wanted to attack the arrogant Baron physically, but the French officers held him back and, ashamed about their sovereign's bad behavior, invited Wintzigerode to dinner in the officers' mess. See *Mémoires du Général de Caulaincourt, Duc de Vicence*, part 1 (Paris: Plon, 1933), p. 100.

My family lived for half a year in an Austrian prison camp where my father installed and ran an x-ray station. We children loved the (mostly Russian) prisoners with whom we played. Then we lived nearly two years in Baden, near Vienna, the Headquarters of the Austro-Hungarian Army, where I sported a British sailor's suit with a ribbon on my cap inscribed "H.M.S. Renown." We also had a French governess and spoke French with her in the streets. Something of the sort would have been unthinkable in the more "progressive" West. After the fall of our great fortress Przemyst (it was starved into surrender), the Russian officers invited their Austro-Hungarian colleagues to a banquet where they toasted each other. I know of an Austrian officer who, made a prisoner, handed to the Russians his calling card.

[35]After Clemenceau and France's Foreign Minister Ribot had torpedoed the peace efforts of Emperor Charles of Austria, Anatole France remarked: "A King of France, yes, a King would have taken pity on our poor people, bled white, attenuated, at the end of their strength. But democracy is without heart, without bowels. A slave of the powers of money, it is pitiless and

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could kindle the fervor of their soldiers more easily because they operated in a highly authoritarian framework. (This also explains why the German army fought well in a hopelessly defensive rear action for more than two years, between 1942 and 1945.)

Yet, the hate propaganda of the democracies was successful. Thus, mixed with racist motives, the United States decided to put the West Coast's entire foreign as well as American population of Japanese ancestry in concentration camps—a wartime tactic developed by the British during the Boer War. There were among them U.S. citizens with only one Japanese grandparent, who looked Caucasian and spoke not a word of Japanese.[36]

Likewise, after the final mass surrender of German soldiers in May 1945, they were not treated as ordinary prisoners of war who were protected by the Hague Convention, but as DEF ("Disarmed Enemy Forces") and dealt with miserably. They were starved and ultimately suffered enormous losses—possibly as many as a million.[37] Indignation about the German Concentration Camps, however, played only a minor role in this "policy," because the facts

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inhumane." See Sir Charles Petrie, *Twenty Years Armistice—and After: British Foreign Policy Since 1918* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1940), p. 12. Rene Schickele, in his *Die Grenze* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1932), pp. 145–46, told us that Clemenceau menaced Anatole France with jail if he were to publish a single line about his reactions to the war.

[36]See Carey MacWilliams, "Moving the West-Coast Japanese," *Harper's* (September 1942).Their fully Caucasian spouses usually went with them. Of the far more exposed Hawaiian population, one-third was Japanese, but they were not "concentrated," since the "Sons of the Golden West" were not active on these islands. However, there was not a single case of espionage among the "American Japanese," and the most heavily decorated American battalion consisted of Hawaiian "Japanese." They paraded in New York.

[37]See James Bacque, *Other Losses* (Toronto: Stoddard, 1989). Germany complained that 1,700,000 prisoners had not been returned after the war. It is true that the Third Reich starved to death many Russian prisoners. German prisoners starved in Russia, but those who returned were, on the trip home, often implored for food by the hungry population.

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about German war atrocities were largely not believed. People remembered the lies spread about the Germans during World War I.[38]

Upon entering the Age of the Armed Horde, wars inevitably took on new forms and another character. The idea was no longer to outmaneuver the enemy and merely to win battles, but—since this was a war between peoples and ideologies—to kill as many enemies as possible, whereby wars assumed an exterminatory character. The mercenaries of the past belonged to different nationalities and, once they "signed up," could be employed for different reasons and operations by their employer, or even "traded" to another one. He who sells himself can also be sold to somebody else.[39]

Since wars had evolved from clashes between crowned heads to conflicts between masses of people, entire nations collectively became enemies of other nations. Therefore, wars could at long last be waged against civilians—not only against beleaguered cities, but against entire populations of men, women, and children. And, since technology had given us aviation, it had become possible to attack villages and cities in the hinterland of the enemy, rather than just attacking the enemy soldiers on the front lines.

The French, pioneers in aviation, made a beginning in World War I by bombing a Corpus Christi procession in Karlsruhe and killing children, and the Germans followed up by dropping bombs from Zeppelins on British cities and firing artillery missiles on Paris from a distance of 80 miles. Frenchmen had to die, regardless of age and sex. This seemed all right; Europe had fallen that low.

Curiously enough, it was the Third Reich (although planning aggressive wars) which desired to ban aerial warfare except on

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[38]In November, 1945, people were interviewed in Detroit about their reactions to the horrors of the German concentration camps. Ninety percent were convinced that all films about them had been staged, and reminded the interviewers of the fake propaganda stories of World War I. Belgian babies with their hands cut off! As Cicero said in his *De divinatione*: "We do not believe a liar, even if he speaks the truth."

[39]The Grand Duke of Hesse did not "sell" his own subjects in armed formation to the British during the American Revolution. These men were mercenaries, from all sorts of nations, who had voluntarily enlisted.

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well-defined battle fronts. In 1935, the Germans, wanting a pact outlawing war on civilians in the hinterland, suggested this to Great Britain, which at that time had a Labour government. However, the offer was rejected on the ground that all efforts to humanize war would make wars more acceptable, and would thus be a blow to the noble cause of pacifism. Actually, all important British authors confirm the thesis that, in the Second World War, the aerial warfare started total war—war to the last extremity—willed and perfected by the democracies, not by the National Socialists. German attacks outside of the war zone were always retaliations. Some British authors merely shamefacedly admitted this fact; others, Mr. Churchill above all, boasted of it.[40]

General J.F.C. Fuller stated that "it was Mr. Churchill who lit the fuse which detonated a war of devastation and terrorization unrivalled since the invasion of the Seldjuks."[41] The war reached

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[40]As a matter of fact, two German pilots were demoted because they had, in the early stage of the war, dropped bombs on London's East End rather than on military targets. The RAF had advised against attacking Berlin or other German cities, but Churchill opposed this idea. See Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1975), pp. 237–38.

The German army was about to conquer Rotterdam and Warsaw when the *Luftwaffe* attacked them. The Bombardment of Coventry was in retaliation for the bombardment of Berlin. Basil Liddell-Hart insisted that the Germans had regarded the proposed (but rejected) airpact as though it were in force, but the Allies always renewed their bombardments. See Basil Liddell-Hart, "War Limited," *Harper's* (March 1946), pp. 198–99. The British Principal Assistant to the Air Ministry defended in two publications the policy of destroying the enemy's economy and, incidentally, killing entire sectors of the population. See J.M. Spaight, *The Battle of Britain* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1941), and *Bombing Vindicated* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1944). Churchill, in his *The Second World War*, vol. 2 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1948–53), pp. 565–67, admitted to planning a huge air force abroad, beyond the German reach, to crush the Third Reich, whose human losses in the air war, as compared to those of the British, were about 1 to 10.

[41]See General J.F.C. Fuller, *The Second World War: 1935–1945* (New York: Duell, Sloane & Pearce, 1949), p. 222–23.

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its all-time lows with the destruction of Dresden, the German Florence, with a loss of 204,000 lives,[42] and the annihilation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.[43] Although the Japanese had desperately asked for armistice conditions twice in 1945, in April through the Vatican, and in July via Moscow, the answer was only the infamous and idiotic "Unconditional Surrender" formula. (The American people knew nothing about this, and during that period, not only did thousands of Japanese died in vain, but so, too, died innumerable American "boys.") The hatred generated by propaganda heated up the horizontal–collective mentality to such a degree that the war in the Pacific assumed, in the words of American Socialist leader Norman Thomas, the character of a militarily organized race riot.

The racist aspect of that war achieved a very concrete expression in a memorable incident: an American soldier sent President Roosevelt a paper-knife, made from the thighbone of a Japanese soldier killed in action. The President wrote him a letter of thanks and expressed his hope to get more such presents. The news reached the Japanese, whereupon Ken Harada, Japanese ambassador at the Vatican, decided to protest via Roman channels. The President then changed his mind and promised to give the knife a dignified burial.[44]

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[42]See David Irving, *The Destruction of Dresden* (London: William Kimber, 1963). The city was flooded with refugees from the East. The interesting question is, how many non-German slave-workers, citizens of Allied countries, were killed in that raid? Surely at least 5,000. It was ordered by Churchill, perhaps to impress the Russians at Yalta. In February, 1945, the war was practically lost by the Germans.

[43]Nagasaki was hit even harder than Hiroshima. The cradle of the Catholic Church in Japan, it was home to the tallest cathedral in the Far East, which, on that day, was filled with worshippers. "Fat Boy" was dropped a few hundred yards from it, killing about 8 percent of Japan's Catholic population in the suburb of Urakami. They had survived 265 years in the "underground" before being wiped out by Harry S. Truman's minions.

[44]Could one imagine one of the crowned heads of Europe engaged in a similar incident? Francis Joseph using the thighbone of a Prussian grenadier as a paper-knife? Or Queen Victoria the keybone of a Boer sharpshooter? Only a paramount chief on the Upper Ubangi might have acted similarly.

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An even graver evidence of sheer barbarism appeared in the bombing of a Gestapo-Center in the Hague, leaving 800 Dutch dead. Even worse were the 3,500 victims of the "carpet-bombing" of Le Havre just prior to its liberation, but after the evacuation by the Germans. De Gaulle was outraged, but the British–American Allies justified themselves by saying, "We really thought that the Gerries were still in the city!" Thereupon de Gaulle hit the ceiling. Butchering 3,500 Frenchmen just to get a few Germans![45] He went to Le Havre for their burial, heading the cortege with the clergy.

Nor was there any respect for the cultural treasures of the Old World. In World War I, the Germans were accused of shelling Reims Cathedral (with the excuse that observers were hidden in the spire) and having willfully burnt down parts of Louvain–Leuwen because civilians had fired on their troops. But World War II was far more "progressive," which means that Europe and North America had declined for the previous 200 years under "populist" rule, and had reached the cultural and ethical level of Dahomey's Glegle or Uganda's Idi Amin Dada.[46] The raids over Germany were called "Baedecker Raids" because, fearing for their safety, the Allied pilots flew very high and emptied their freight more or less in the historic centers of the cities, destroying the most beautiful buildings, but damaging industrial war production astonishingly little. The hearts of Frankfurt, Munich, Nuremberg, Hamburg, and Bremen were in shambles, but the industrial establishments surrounding them survived. (Some Allied spokesmen explained that one wanted to hit the workers' dwellings, while others thought that annihilating German "Kultur" destroyed Nazi arrogance.) Yet, that blood orgy contributed little to the Allied victory. IG-Farben and other big enterprises functioned to the bitter end.

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[45]See Ann O'Hare McCormick in *The New York Times* (October 9, 1944). More than 1500 people were also wounded or permanently mutilated.

[46]See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed. (1911), under the word "Dahomey"; also Henry Kyemba, *State of Blood* (London: Corgi Books, 1977). Idi Amin "lectured" at the UN in New York. Convinced that human flesh had a "lovely salty flavor," he also practiced "Gastronomic Democracy." Kyemba was one of his former ministers.

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One of the worst and most idiotic feats was the U.S. army's destruction of the ancient Italian monastery of Monte Cassino. The Allies had been informed that there were no German troops inside, but since the building remained intact, a hue and cry was raised in the United States that to spare the monastery would be yielding to "Roman Catholic interests" at the cost of American lives. "Our Boys" would have to die to please the Pope! Finally, the military yielded to bolster the "home front." The *vox populi* should not be thwarted, and a political decision, not a military decision, was made. The old building went up in flames, thus making it safe for the Germans to occupy the ruins, whereas to defend a huge building under artillery fire would have been suicidal. Now the American soldiers faced an enemy much better entrenched and more fully protected by the rocks of the destroyed abbey. No falling walls could bury them. The Allied losses became much bigger, as did those of the poor betrayed Poles who had to fight with them, but public opinion was satisfied: the war was fought democratically.[47]

Yet, what did the American soldiers think of such irreparable losses of architectural beauty? An officer stationed near Benevento, asked whether he had any misgivings, replied to an American journalist, "There's nothing what can be done about it. Italy is just lousy with clerical monuments."

Most unfortunately, the Second World War had another fatal aspect: the resistance movement, enthusiastically applauded by the "public" of the Western Alliance. An exception has to be made for the Polish *Armia Kraiowa*, as well as for Jewish fighters, because the National Socialists, like the International Socialists, wanted to

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[47]My father-in-law's chauffeur was a German soldier at Monte Cassino. He told me that he and his companions thought that the Americans had gone out of their minds. There was not a single German soldier in the building, and the rubble was ideal for defense.

In my several visits to Vietnam, it was clear to me that the U.S. Army had a similar problem in that war. It could not fight in a purely military way, and often had to make its moves in synchromesh with a fabricated public opinion.

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deprive them of their upper classes or to exterminate them altogether.[48] With no legal armies for their defense, they had the moral right to fight for their very existence.[49] Yet, as in other countries, the occupying army had no other means to combat these sly attackers but to take hostages and shoot them. Not-completely-democratized nations did not engage in such activities, and, all too often, "Resisters" were former collaborators who, sensing that the Third Reich was a sinking ship, changed sides.[50] Obviously, the French *Résistance* became truly active only after the collapse of the National–International Alliance. There had been a predecessor of the civilian *Résistance*, after France became a republic in 1870, in the form of the *franc-tireurs*, entirely in keeping with the rising horizontalism. One used to have no right to participate in a war without wearing the "King's Coat." The alternative was to sink to the level of savages. This was somewhat different in the case of the Balkans, where, after 500 years of Turkish rule, the Christian tradition had been broken, and one went to war "collectively," as we painfully experienced in two World Wars. First we had the nationalistic *komitadjis*, then the ideological *partizani*.[51]

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[48]The two socialisms tried jointly to exterminate the Polish top layers. The Russians admitted 15,000 butchered in Katyn and elsewhere. In Auschwitz, one can see barrack after barrack with photos of Polish victims. The camp was first designed to exterminate Poles; the Hebrew flood came in full force only in 1941.

[49]The same holds true for the battle over the Warsaw Ghetto. There had been no peace or armistice between Germany and Poland, nor a declared war between Germany and Czechoslovakia.

[50]According to the Goebbels Diaries, cooperation between the Czech industry and working class with the occupants was perfect. Then the Germans walked into the trap laid by the Czech government in exile, which organized the assassination of Heydrich, and they retaliated with the destruction of Lidice. After the war, the Germans of Bohemia-Moravia, even before being expelled, suffered atrociously, more often than not at the hands of former collaborators who now proved their "patriotism" by torturing helpless civilians.

[51]In World War I, the Austro-Hungarian occupants in Serbia had troubles with *franc-tireurs* (erroneously called *komitadjis*). In World War II, the

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VII

One of the worst results of the democratization of wars was—and remains—the difficulty in terminating a war by peace, or, at least, by lengthy periods of peace. In a partially or fully democratic order, having fought with conscripted soldiers, one is governed largely by representatives of the people who do not think historically, but politically. Of history, economics, cultural mentalities, and geography, they know nothing. Moreover, they think "personally," not dynastically. What do they have primarily in mind? The weal of their grandchildren and great grandchildren? Or the winning of the next election? Furthermore, the returning soldiers, if they have been fighting on the winning side, want to see the fruits of their suffering, so they yearn for a "peace" with maximum gains for their country. (Mercenaries thought otherwise. They had their next job in mind.)

Moreover, generosity is a virtue more frequently found in the small top layers than among the masses. After all, it takes intelligence to suspect that generosity very often pays while egotism does not. In a brilliant book, Fénélon exhorted the Dauphin,

> Peace treaties are meaningless if you are the stronger one and if you force your neighbor to sign a treaty to avoid greater evil; then he signs in the same way as a person who surrenders his purse to a brigand who points his pistol at his throat.[52]

Yet, already in the nineteenth century, in which we witnessed the democratization of "constitutional" monarchies, we see that the warning of Fénélon was increasingly ignored. The German drive

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savagery and cruelty had no limits. Croats fought with Germans and Serbs, and Serbs fought Croats, Germans, Italians, and other Serbs in an *Asian* manner. Churchill supported the Bolsheviks because (as he told Fitzroy MacLean) they were "better at killing Germans" than his original Allies under Colonel Draza Mihajlovic, who was roundly betrayed by the West and executed by the Titoists.

[52]See Francois Fénélon de la Mothe, "Direction pour la conscience d'un roi," in *Oeuvres*, vol. 25 (Paris: n.p., 1787), p. 489.

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for unification and the Italian Risorgimento offered opportunities to annex entire countries and to make dynasties homeless. In this respect, the Italians made the start. The sovereigns of Modena, Parma, and Tuscany, and the Bourbons of both Sicilies had to quit. After the liberation of Sleswig–Holstein from Danish rule by the German League, the legitimate heirs were not allowed to take over their inheritance. The situation was made worse by the outcome of the German–Prussian War of 1866,[53] which ended with Prussia's incorporation not only of Sleswig–Holstein, but also of Hesse–Nassau, the Imperial City of Frankfurt, and the Kingdom of Hanover.[54] This was the policy of Bismarck, who had started his life as a typical Prussian Conservative and devout Lutheran Christian, but became a German nationalist and a "National Liberal" who, soon after the establishment of the German Empire (the "Second Reich"), initiated as a "nationalistic progressivist" the Kulturkampf against the Catholic Church.[55]

Yet, the real break came with the end of World War I, which changed from a war between nations into an ideological "Crusade to Make the World Safe for Democracy." By 1900, Europe had only two democratic republics (France and Switzerland), a form of government then represented largely by South and Central American nations "enriched" in 1910 and 1912 by Portugal and China.[56]

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[53]This was the war of the German League against the Prussian–Italian alliance. To call it the "Austro–Prussian War" is a misnomer.

[54]Did William I approve of the war against the German League? His queen ostentatiously left Berlin at the outbreak of the war.

[55]Bismarck was the driving and deciding force. William I of Prussia was reluctant to become the German Emperor, that is, the emperor of Germany (Deutschland). A country with that name has existed officially only since 1949. One must remember that the Habsburgs ruled the "Germanies" for more than 600 years, the Hohenzollerns for only 47, and that William's predecessor, his brother, Frederick William IV, had declared that he would be only too happy if, at the coronation of a Habsburg as German Emperor, he could hold the wash basin at the ceremony.

[56]We do not mention Poland at all, which, since 1572 was an elective monarchy, was called a republic (*rzeczpospolita*), and was actually ruled by

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The great victory of democracy in Central Europe (even though its triumph in Russia lasted only 7 months) and the disappearance of the three emperors created a new scene. The democrats expected to fashion the "peace" democratically, i.e., by the consent of the majority of the voters in the victorious nations.

Of course, if we look at Wilson's Fourteen Points,[57] the defeated should have expected the principle of self-determination to be applied even to them, but this lovely document had merely been bait for surrender. Since the victors were the democracies, the "treaties" were not treaties but dictates which had to please the voters at home. Since these had been taught to "hate the enemy," the agitated masses in reality voted for (even if indirectly) the dictates. In Britain, we had the famous "Khaki Election," an orgy of demagoguery in which Lloyd George promised to ruin the German middle class by way of exorbitant reparations, to make Germany pay "so that the pips squeak," and to "hang the Kaiser."

George F. Kennan stated that nearly all our evils go back to the First World War, not to the fighting, but to the outcome. I offer four reasons for his thesis: American intervention, which artificially prolonged the war and prevented a compromise peace;[58]

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the nobility. This most tolerant country in Europe had ceased to exist by 1795.

[57]The "Fourteen Points" had been written by Walter Lippmann. It mentioned the "autonomous development" of the nationalities of Austria-Hungary. The definition of the word "autonomous" is not clear in English. It might stand for total separation, or merely for local rights and privileges. Lippmann, an admirable man, told me that in his mind, it had the latter meaning.

[58]In an interview with the *New York Enquirer* in June 1936, Churchill berated the United States for not joining the Allies until 1917. They had secretly tried to reach a compromise peace which would have saved countless human lives, and prevented the rise of National Socialism and possibly even of Communism in Russia. His interview was read aloud by an "isolationst" before Congress in September 1939. Yet, such a compromise peace would have not fulfilled Wilson's dream of making the world unsafe by democracy.

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the combination of national combat with an ideological crusade that aggravated the issue; the mountainous historical, geographic, economic, and psychological ignorance of the politicians who naturally (thinking only of elections) wanted to please the voters; and the people's intellectual vacuum after their emotions had been whipped up to the nth degree.

The bad taste of Bismarck, who organized the celebrations for the establishment of the Second Reich in Versailles, was now imitated by those who prepared the humiliation of the German Reich in the Mirror Hall of the same building. There, as in the far more important dictates of St.Germain-en-Laye and Trianon, were laid the foundations of the Third Reich and World War II with an admirable foresight and loving care in every detail. The Versailles Treaty did tremendous harm in Germany internally, but hardly changed the map of Europe.

The destruction of the Habsburg Empire made Germany the geopolitical winner of World War I. Bordering after 1919 on only one great power, France, it was now the direct or indirect neighbor in the East of partly artificial, partly militarily indefensible states. As His Magnificence Ernst Kornemann, the Rector of Breslau University, pointed out in 1926, the time to take advantage of this situation would come sooner or later. It came.

Hitler inherited from the authors of the Paris Suburban Treaties not only an internal situation characterized by the economic uprooting of important social layers and the imposition of an unworkable form of government,[59] but also a uniquely profitable geopolitical position which was caused primarily by the division

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[59]Jacques Bainville dreaded the idea of a German *Republic* (demanded by the German Socialist Karl Liebknecht). He was certain that it would imitate the Jacobins and, in the name of a Germany "one and indivisible," become violently nationalistic—and how right he was. See his article in the *Action Francaise* (Sept. 29, 1914).

Goebbels had seen in German National Socialism the companion picture to the French Revolution, and boasted, in *Der Angriff* (December 6, 1931), that his party represented "the German Left."

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of Austria-Hungary.[60] If Hitler had had any sense of humor, he would have erected a colossal monument to Woodrow Wilson.[61]

Looking back at these happenings, John Maynard Keynes, who assisted Lloyd George at these conferences, wrote that

> The Carthaginian Peace is not practically right and possible. . . . The Clock cannot be set back . . . without setting up such strains in the European structure and letting loose such human and spiritual forces as, pushing beyond frontiers and races, will overwhelm not only you and your "guarantees," but your institutions and the existing order of your Society.[62]

One of these "guarantees" was the League of Nations, which Compton Mackenzie called "a typist's dream of the Holy Roman Empire," and which the Congress of the United States refused to join.[63] Still, there is no doubt that general satisfaction reigned in

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[60]To the broad public in the Western Democracies, Germany and "the Kaiser" was The Enemy. Not so among the leading politicians, however, who were all linked by a Leftist–Protestant dislike against the Danubian Monarchy, for which one finds ample documentation in my books. Clemenceau loathed the Habsburgs so much that when the Germans were nearing Paris in August 1914, he only lambasted Austria. (See the surprise of Poincare in his diaries.) Lloyd George adored Hitler, but attacked Franco "because I always line up against the priests," as he explained to Virginia Cowley. Sir Denis Brogan and Raymond Aron correctly called World War I the "Second War of Austrian Succession." World War II was undoubtedly the Third War in this series.

[61]*Reichstag* President Paul Löbe, a Social Democrat, although briefly incarcerated twice by the National Socialists, received a pension in the Third Reich for his role in replacing the monarchy with a republic.

[62]See John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (London: Harcourt, Brace, 1920), pp. 4–5.

[63]As an excuse for Wilson, it should be mentioned that he had suffered his first stroke in 1896, and, in 1906, a second massive stroke which blinded him in one eye and forced him to write with his left hand. This ruin of a man won the 1912 elections thanks to the antics of Theodore Roosevelt. At the Paris Peace Conferences, he was tortured by two delicate ailments. In September 1919, he suffered a third stroke which subsequently resulted in his

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the nations of the victors, not only among the Americans, British, French, and Italians, but also among the Czechs, Rumanians, and Serbs.[64] However, intelligent Poles, seeing their country buffeted between Germany and the Soviet Union, remained skeptical.[65] Yet "History," always immensely brutal, might have said to the defeated: "Since you were disloyal to your better self, to your heritage and traditions, you will serve not Emperors but Exterminators in abject slavery, pitiless megalomaniacs who will force you back to another slaughter!" And to the victors she would say: "Profiting from your huge superiority in men and wealth, you have abused your triumph and paid dearly not only with men, women, and children, but also with your world-wide prestige and possessions!"

Looking back to World War I, the old democratic enthusiasm for extending the great ideals of the French Revolution reappears,[66]

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wife running the White House. See Edwin W. Weinstein, *Woodrow Wilson: A Medical and Psychological Biography* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981). Just as important and frightening is the book Sigmund Freud wrote jointly with William C. Bullitt, *Thomas Woodrow Wilson: A Psychological Study* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967). Freud told Max Eastman that Wilson was "the silliest fool of the entire century and also a criminal without realizing it."

[64]June 28, 1389, was the day of the assassination of Serb Sultan Murad. Exactly 525 years later, in 1914, was the date of the double murder of Sarajevo. June 28 was cleverly selected for the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, and also by the "Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes," which in 1929 was named "Jugoslavia." On the same day, a meeting of "Czechoslovak" ministers decided to send a congratulatory telegram for that crime to the new Balkan state, expressing "the hope for further such heroic deeds." Butchering a couple! There we see the bloody heritage of the French Revolution.

[65]Lloyd George ardently hated Poland, and saw to it that a Polish part of Silesia was given to Czechoslovakia. When he heard about the Red Army's advance on Warsaw in 1920, he danced joyfully. As to his character, see the biography by his son, Richard Lloyd George, the Earl of Dwyfor, *My Father, Lloyd George* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1960).

[66]"Democracy" is a theological problem, since government is the result of Original Sin. Democracy embodies the illusion that "Self-Government"

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even at the price of enormous bloodshed, because democracy means to simple spirits freedom from rule from above or outside. When a compromise peace was in the offing, the democratic idealists went up in arms. The "Left hand of Wilson" in foreign politics, George D. Herron, preferred even a Prussian victory to a compromise peace, which to him meant aristocracy, Ruhr barons, Habsburgs, and the Catholic Church, and "would break God's heart," whereas, even after a triumph of the Hohenzollerns, the nations "still might awake after a long baleful night to cosmic intimacy and infinite knowledge."[67]

Wilson greatly admired Herron, and made him his go-between in Europe during the war, thus giving him the opportunity to torpedo the Austrian peace effort in February, 1918, for it would have meant the political survival of the Habsburgs.[68] Yet, under conscription, the lives of soldiers are of little value, since they are easily replaced. The same holds true for the rebuff suffered by the secret German Right before the outbreak of the Second World War (the Halder–Beck conspiracy), and then for the rebuff during the war of their efforts through Dr. Bell, the Bishop of Chichester, who begged in

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means really to rule oneself and nobody else involved, whereas it is simply the rule of the majority over the minority. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman told us that "Self-government is better than good government." So the next time we have a serious disease, we should practice quackery on ourselves and dispense with the medical profession.

[67]See George D. Herron, *The Menace of Peace* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1917), pp. 9–10. Wilson apparently found himself only understood by a defrocked minister (he had committed adultery), a former socialist and pacifist who, after his divorce, married the daughter of the wealthy Mrs. Rand, foundress of New York's "Rand School of Social Science."

[68]Herron's willful ruining of the Austrian peace effort in February 1918 is well described by his Slovak assistant, Stefan Osusky, in *George D. Herron: Dovernik Wilsonov pocas vojny* (Pressburg: Naklad Prudov, 1925). Incidentally, it was Herron's idea to locate the League of Nations headquarters in Geneva, the city of Calvin and Rousseau. The "Herron Papers" are preserved in the Hoover Institute, Stanford, California, and are available in 13 neatly typed volumes.

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vain to get the cooperation of Winston Churchill.[69]

The Germans had to sign the "Treaty" in Versailles because the hunger blockade worked like thumb-screws. The hope for a liberal democracy in Russia had been snuffed out by the radical Social Democrats, the so-called Bolsheviks, and thus Russia was no longer a "fit partner in a league of honor," as Wilson had greeted the rule of Alexander Kerensky. (Twenty years later, the New Russia, the "Socialist Fatherland," had the delightful chance to start the Second World War jointly with the National Socialists.)

Had the European monarchs ever tried to enforce monarchism in the Second or Third French Republic, in Brazil after the fall of the monarchy, or in Portugal in 1910? No, because there is no such thing as "monarchism." Democracy as democratism is a gnostic ideology hell-bent on "saving the world."[70] Monarchy is "familistic." The family is something natural. It needs no philosophical impulses. It represents no secular religion.

Yet, to make people happy (after one's own fashion), sometimes requires a little and occasionally even a lot of pressure. In February 1914, Mr. Wilson thought that the Mexicans would be much happier if, politically, they imitated the United States, which in turn had imitated France.[71] This worried Sir Edward Grey, the

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[69]I met the Bishop of Chichester in New York after the war. He assured me that Churchill had not read the material he gave him. (Drinking a bottle of whiskey every day, Churchill obviously did not have the time.) Anthony Eden was afraid to irritate the Soviets if contacts were taken up with German generals. Eden was also the man who surrendered the anti-communist Russians, Croats, and Slovenes to the Soviets and to Tito. They were butchered *en masse*.

[70]The gnostic character of democracy was also obvious to Eric Voegelin in *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism* (Chicago: Regnery, 1968).

[71]I often ask American audiences where in the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution one finds the words "democracy" and "republic." Their surprise is great when they learn that neither appears in either document. When I tell them that, according to Charles Beard, the Founding Fathers hated democracy more than Original Sin, they are surprised.

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British Foreign Minister. Between him and American Ambassador Walter Hines Page, a curious dialogue developed. The theme was Mexican reluctance to adopt a full-fledged democracy, which the United States, after all, had fostered and abetted in Mexico even before they had supported Benito Juarez, the murderer of Emperor Maximilian.[72] The exchange of opinions went as follows:

> Grey: Suppose you have to intervene, what then?
> Page: Make 'em vote and live by their decisions.
> Grey: But suppose they will not so live?
> Page: We'll go in again and make 'em vote again.
> Grey: And keep this up for 200 years?
> Page: Yes. The United States will be here for 200 years and it can continue to hoot them for that little space till they learn to vote and rule themselves.[73]

With that unsophisticated mentality, the "young democracies" were forced to "enjoy" self-government, to rave about their "new republican liberty."[74] This wording reminds one of the Napoleonic conquerors of the Tyrol and the spirit in which the Suburban Paris Treaties were dictated.[75] France had drowned Europe in blood in

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Nor are they delighted when I tell them that after 1828, their country had gone to the French School.

[72]The Duce was given his Spanish first name by his anarchist father. It was Benito (instead of Benedetto) in honor of Benito Juarez, who had a monarch executed. The fasces, we must remember, are a republican symbol, and Fascism found its full realization only in the *Republica Sociale Italiana*, with the seat in Salo.

[73]See Burton J. Hendrick, *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, vol. 1 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1925), p. 188.

[74]How much female American influence was then active in the political scene? Masaryk, who had persuaded Wilson that in the war, Austria was even guiltier than was Germany, had an American wife, and so had Clemenceau. Churchill then played only a minor role, but his mother was American. The mother of Italian foreign minister Sonnino was not American but British, and he became an Anglican.

[75]When the French Army invaded the Tyrol during the Napoleonic Wars, they declared solemnly: "We bring you liberty whether you like it or not!"

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the 1795–1815 period. Yet, at the Congress of Vienna, its delegates were received with great honor, the sessions and discussions were conducted in French, and France left the conference tables slightly *enlarged*.[76] There was no cry to "Hang the *Empereur*!"—nor was there a "public" whose craving for revenge had to be satisfied.

VIII

Of course, it would be naive to think that wars in the truly monarchical period of our Christian history were a pleasant pastime. Wars were not infrequent, and the discipline among the mercenaries was miserable. Occupied cities had to pay contributions, the taking of booty was accepted, and marauding soldiers were a plague. It was only in the eighteenth century that wars had assumed a civilized character.[77] The fact that generals belonged to noble families helped greatly. They had the right upbringing, and Europe's aristocracy was internationally related, although not to the extent of the royal–imperial families.[78] In judging the character of their enemies, they certainly were never influenced by the mass media. One

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This is amusing when one realizes that since the late fourteenth century, the Tyroleans had a *Landtag* where all four estates were represented, and they all had equal power.

[76]In 1814–15, France received the Papal enclave of Avignon, and joined the Holy Alliance. (Britain soon left it.)

[77]In Lucerne one can admire Thorvaldsen's "Dying Lion," erected to the memory of the Swiss mercenaries who died loyally in the service of Louis XVI at the Tuileries. They were massacred to the last man.

[78]Velasquez's painting of *The Surrender of Breda* can be seen in Madrid's Prado. The painting shows "Gentlemen of the Old School" in a delightful ceremony. That "Old School" still existed during World War I. The son of that supreme traitor, Thomas G. Masaryk, served as a Hussar captain in the Austro-Hungarian Army until the very end. He then told his colonel that neither he nor his fellow officers ever mentioned the well-known activities of his father. "It was often at the very tip of our tongues," the colonel replied, "but, of course, we never did [mention it]." This was reported by Indro Montanelli. Could anybody imagine anything similar in a Western Army?

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cannot imagine Marlborough being moved by the editorials in London's *Daily Courant*, as President Kennedy was by David Halberstam of the *New York Times*.

The monarchs, however, were not only an international, but also an interracial breed, a great advantage to nations they ruled because it gave them a certain distance from their subjects whom they could, thus, judge more objectively. In 1909, the only genuinely native sovereign dynasties in Europe were the Petrovic–Njegos in Montenegro and the Karagjorgjevic in Serbia, certainly not the most significant or distinguished ones. The House of Saxe–Coburg–Gotha ruled in Saxe–Coburg, Great Britain,[79] Belgium, Portugal, and Bulgaria; the Holstein–Gattorps ruled in Russia, where the real Romanovs had died out with Peter II; the Bourbons ruled in Spain; the Alemannic Hohenzollerns ruled Prussia and Rumania; the Nassaus ruled in the Netherlands and in Luxemburg; the Swiss–Lotharingian Habsburgs ruled in Austria-Hungary; the (French) Savoys ruled in Italy; and the Sonderburg–Glücksburg–Augustenburgs ruled in Denmark, Norway, and Greece. They all descended from Charlemagne and Muhammad,[80] had a drop of Jewish blood,[81] and, from the motherline of Maria Theresia they come from Kumanian (Turk–Tatar) princes.[82]

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[79]When the British Royal House changed its name from Saxe–Coburg–Gotha to Windsor to please the people, William II remarked: "Children, next time we go to the theater we'll see the 'Merry Wives of Saxe–Coburg–Gotha.'" Prince Charles belongs *de facto* to the House of Sonderburg–Glücksburg–Augustenburg, alias Windsor. His father was, after all, born a Greek Prince, though without a drop of Greek blood.

[80]Alfonso IV, King of Castile, married the daughter of a captive Moroccan prince from whom all sovereign houses of Europe descend. Corresponding with members of European dynasties, King Hassan II of Morocco and his friends call each other "*Cher Cousin*."

[81]The Hebrew ancestor is Pierleone, brother of the antipope Anaclet II, the "Pope from the Ghetto."

[82]Otto Forst de Battaglia, *Das Geheimnis des Blutes* (Vienna: Reinhold, 1932), pp. 45–46, informs us that William II and George V of Britain also had Djenhiz–Khan as a common ancestor.

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The Reformation raised a wall between the Catholic and Protestant families, but it was sometimes broken.[83] Despite quarrels, wars, and denominational differences, even as late as 1870 the defeated Napoleon III dined as a prisoner with William I of Prussia and Bismarck in Wilhelmshöhe Castle, where the Prussian King addressed the French Emperor as *"Mon chère Monsieur frère*!"[84] Self-control, good manners, and generosity belonged to a monarch.

Here we have to keep in mind that although the interrelationship between the monarchs was tightened in the course of centuries, they were not entirely immune to the influence of the historic developments after 1789, in other words, to democracy, socialism,[85] nationalism, and "horizontalist" temptations.[86] It is even doubtful whether Lloyd George alone was responsible for not saving the lives of the Russian Imperial family. In 1917, the British refused to give them asylum.[87]

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[83]Elena of Spain, wife of Alfonso XIII and granddaughter of Queen Victoria, was originally an Anglican; Astrid, wife of Leopold III of Belgium, was a Lutheran Princess from Sweden; the present Queen of Spain is a great-granddaughter of William II.

[84]Napoleon III had been offended because Nicholas I had addressed him merely as "Dear Cousin." At that meeting in Kassel, Bismarck spoke an impeccable French, whereas Napoleon III, having spent his youth and student years in German exile, had a German accent. Napoleon I, when speaking French, had an Italian accent.

[85]In the quarrel between William II and Bismarck, which led to the latter's dismissal, the "Social Question" played a major role. The Emperor was emphatic on the side of the Provider State, favoring more social legislation.

[86]The inroads of ethnicism in the feeling of monarchs was evident in 1916 when the Empress Alexandra received in audience a young Austrian Countess Kinsky, sent by the Red Cross to inspect Russian Prison Camps. The Empress, thinking that her visitor (because of her name) considered herself a Czech, asked her, "Do you really like these Germans, dear child?" The countess stiffened up and replied, "These are *our* allies, Your Majesty!" The Empress immediately apologized for her *faux pas*. See Nora Gräfin Kinsky, *Russisches Tagebuch* (Stuttgart: Seewald, 1976), p. 87.

[87]It is unclear whether the guilt for not saving Nicholas II and his family lies with Lloyd George, George V, or both. Knowing of his peace efforts,

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Monarchy had several great advantages. First of all, one could expect a monarch to be psychologically[88] and intellectually prepared for his task. Considering the intellectual preparation of some leading politicians for their task, we can only throw up our hands in horror, as often their looks and their gift of gab alone got them into office. A second asset is (or rather was) their international relationships and their lack of local ties.[89] Number three is the fact that they owe their position to no party, faction, interest group, estate, or class, but only, to use the words of Bossuet, to "the sweet process of nature."[90] The fourth advantage is that monarchs had the chance to act historically. In democracies, where the primary task is to win elections,

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they both saw him as a "traitor." William II was desperate about not being able to do anything for them. When the "Bolshevik" wing of the Social Democrats took over, the fate of the Imperial family was sealed.

[88]Monarchs usually realized that had they been born a few blocks away from the royal or imperial palace, they would never have been sovereigns. Nor could they claim that their office came about because of their intelligence, courage, intuitions, or superior qualities. Hence, the more highly developed megalomania of popular leaders, especially if they were not religious. (The dictum of Acton, "Power tends to corrupt, absolute power corrupts absolutely," is valid only for non-religious people. Charles V, in whose realm the sun never set, was a true saint when compared to Rufino Barrios, the atheistic tyrant of Guatemala, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, or Hitler.)

[89]Today, monarchs hold only symbolic value, their marriages no longer play a political role, and they have partly lost their international character. Still, it is significant that Swedish royalty is permitted to marry non-royalty, provided the partner is a foreigner. Yet, the present law of succession is clearly "undynastic": a daughter can precede a male heir, so the name of the dynasty becomes fictitious, like that of the "Windsors."

[90]In the Middle Ages, European monarchs were very much subject to Constitutions. There was the principle of *rex sub lege*. See Fritz Kern, *Gottesgnadentum und Widerstandsrecht im frühen Mittelalter* (Leipzig: Koehler, 1914). The right to rebellion survived in post-Reformist Europe. The Jesuit Mariana taught, *Justum est necare reges impios*. For Calvin, a monstrous monarch was *un ire de dieu*, whom one had to suffer with patience. Luther taught in the same way. According to Fernando d'Antonio, Aquinas permitted tyrannicide in the course of a general rebellion; see his *Il tiranni cidio nel pensiero del Acquinate* (1939).

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and where instability with nicely spaced changes is even a matter of pride, a constructive foreign policy is well-nigh impossible.[91] Monarchs were in office until they died, at which time they left their realms to their sons or nearest relatives. They could act historically, not politically, in a way without a time limit. Hence, their various "Political Testaments."

This has been aptly demonstated by Professor Hans-Hermann Hoppe in an essay which likens the democratic procedure to a small child wanting his wishes fufilled immediately, and protests in tears if there is a delay or a negative reaction. A monarch, as a member of a dynasty, can plan for the distant future, even for generations.[92] Yet, it would be most erroneous to believe that a return to monarchy, even a Christian monarchy, would solve all of our problems. Recall the praise the great monarchist Charles Maurras bestowed on this form of government: "*Le moindre mal. La possibilité du bien*. (The least evil. The possibility of something good.)"

Still, a monarch as member of a dynasty can plan for the distant future, even for generations. In our times, in which the globe has been transformed into an immensely complex scene, the abyss between the *Scita* and the *Scienda*, the actual knowledge of voters and candidates compared with the necessary knowledge, unavoidably widens all the time. And since the required knowledge among those active or passive in the democratic process is minute, only sentiments, sympathies, and antipathies, pleasing and unpleasant factors, are now effective. Hence, democracies act like rabbits jumping in all imaginable directions, into unwanted wars,[93] idealistic crusades,

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[91]As to the impossibility of a sound foreign policy in a democratic age, see my article "Foreign Policy and the Popular Will," *Chronicles* (June 1998). Democracies are merry-go-rounds.

[92]See Hans-Hermann Hoppe, "Time Preference, Government, and the Process of De-Civilization: From Monarchy to Democracy," in *The Costs of War: America's Pyrrhic Victories*, ed. John V. Denson (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1997).

[93]All American wars after 1945 have been deeply affected by the democratic process: Korea, Vietnam, and even the Persian Gulf. The amazing case was Vietnam. See Leslie Gelb, *The Irony of Vietnam: The System*

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and undesirable, fatal peace arrangements. From childhood, monarchs were prepared for their duties. They "inherited" their profession as traditionally as craftsmen did theirs. The son of a tailor became a tailor, and so forth. These tailors produced sometimes bad garments, occasionally excellent ones but usually passable ones. So, too, with monarchs. Yet dentists, lawyers, cobblers, farmers, or plumbers could not have produced any clothes whatever, only monstrosities. Hence, the decline of Europe, already lasting more than 200 years, which also means that one should not forget the already mentioned fact that monarchy compromised with democracy during the nineteenth century, and thus acquired merely a psychological role in the twentieth.[94]

Wars, however, are undesirable under all circumstances. The ideal solution (at present a dream without any hope of realization) would be a board of Christian monarchs[95] controlling the globe,

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Worked (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1978). The message of this book and its leftist author is revealed in the title: the irony lies in the fact that this victory of communism was at the same time a victory of democracy, and the system worked because majority opinion forced the White House, the Pentagon, and the Congress to give up. Thus, 56,000 men died in vain. Dissident Viet Cong Colonel Bui-Tin's book, *Following Ho Chi Minh: Memoirs of a North Vietnamese Colonel* (London: Hurst, 1995), proves that an American victory was, in fact, attainable. All because of errors at the top? Remember James Bryce's *The American Commonwealth*, vol. 1, chap. 8 (London & New York: MacMillan, 1888), entitled "Why a great man cannot be elected President of the United States." This is only partly because of the inverted pyramid, since the half-educated had nearly reached the original top.

[94]We have to bear in mind that democracies *boast* of their instability and their dislike for expertise. The real "hero" in democratic folklore is always the "successful amateur," not the expert, which implies that knowledge and experience have no value.

[95]We can see the Muslim version of this in Malaysia. The Sultans of Malaysia vote a man among themselves into power for the next five years. His title is "Yang di-Pertuan Agong," and he is addressed as "Your Majesty." The title and position of the person who will head the European Union remains a riddle.

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aware of the fact that wars today, thanks to the developments of technology, chemistry, physics, and biology, have assumed a suicidal character.[96] They menace the survival of all mankind, which, so far, has no common spiritual denominator. Neither has the U.N., nor, really, the European Union. So far, the E.U. can only boast of a common economic desire to become more *prosperous* and a common *defense* against outside enemies (but without any aggressive drive). Under these circumstances, its coat of arms should be a fat porcupine, a beast fairly safe in its natural surroundings, but not a valid symbol for Europe.

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[96]European monarchs are still psychologic lightning rods, preventing popular leaders from grabbing absolute power. This worked even in the case of an Italian King who, in a great emergency, put a dictator into an ambulance and shipped him to a mountaintop. Yet, the extent to which a "constitutional monarchy" is problematic was shown in Belgium, where a King abdicated temporarily to avoid having to sign a fundamentally immoral law. He was then called back by the parliament.

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SELF-OWNERSHIP AND CONSENT: THE CONTRACTARIAN LIBERALISM OF RICHARD OVERTON

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In the 1640s, an unknown English printer by the name of Richard Overton suddenly surfaced, seemingly out of nowhere, and catapulted himself into national attention and controversy, only to disappear almost as suddenly into an equally obscure nowhere.[1] Nobody has more successfully summarized the character, life, and work of this fascinating than Gerald E. Aylmer, the prominent scholar of seventeenth-century English politics:

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[1]Nothing is known about Overton's birth or death. Overton's foremost biographer has assumed that he was born ca. 1615 and died ca. 1664. See Marie Gimelfarb-Brack, *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité, Justice! La Vie et l'oeuvre de Richard Overton, Niveleur* (Bern and Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1979); and Marie Gimelfarb-Brack, "Richard Overton (fl. 1631–1664)," in *Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals in the Seventeenth Century*, vol. 2, ed. Richard L. Greaves and Robert Zaller (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1981). Because this article quotes Overton's pamphlets extensively, they will be cited only by title in all but the first citation of each.

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> Of all the remarkable personalities thrown up by the upheavals of 1640–60 in England, Richard Overton, the Leveller, is among the most colourful and remarkable. Constantly at odds with authority, he was ever the champion of radical causes and of both individual and popular rights. In addition to this, Overton wrote with a force, an urgency, and a directness that still speak vividly to us across the centuries. He typifies the new-style popular pamphleteer, seeking a mass audience and employing the "plain style" in order to achieve this. Overton struck massive journalistic and intellectual blows against the monarchy and the bishops of Charles I and William Laud; against the intolerant oligarchy of a parliamentary-controlled Presbyterian church system; against the jurisdiction of hereditary House of Lords over the free commoners of England; and finally against the new authoritarianism of the Rump Parliament during the Commonwealth and then of the Cromwellian Protectorate.[2]

Richard Overton was one of the three informal leaders of the so-called Leveller movement during the English Civil War (1642–49), the others being Lieutenant-Colonel John Lilburne (1615–57) and William Walwyn (1600–81).[3] As a political movement, the Leveller Party initially focused on a concern for religious matters, first and foremost a quest for religious freedom and separation of church and state. But soon it became a radical, popular movement, primarily consisting of ordinary citizens and soldiers of the Army, opposed to the Anglican Church of England, the House of Lords, and the government of King Charles I, and thus was somewhat sympathetic, for a time, to Cromwell, the Independents, and the Protectorate. But

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[2]Gerald E. Aylmer, foreword to *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité, Justice! La Vie et l'oeuvre de Richard Overton, Niveleur*, by Marie Gimelfarb-Brack (Bern and Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1979), p. vii.

[3]The Leveller movement had only a brief existence. It surfaced in the summer of 1645, became a vocal popular party in 1646, and disappeared as an organized movement during the fall of 1649. For a chronological overview, see Roderick Moore, *The Levellers: A Chronology and Bibliography* (London: Libertarian Alliance, 1994); also Andrew Sharp, "The English Levellers, 1645–1649, with a Chronological Table," introduction to *The English Levellers*, ed. Andrew Sharp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. xxiii–xxx.

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as the events of the Civil War unfolded, and as the new Commonwealth seemed to become tyrannical, the Levellers quickly became the most prominent radical opposition. Indeed, they became as opposed to Cromwell and his Council of State as they had been to the Old Order.

In the Leveller movement, Overton was the writer, characterized by strict logic, clarity, and a deeply satirical style. But while his writings are relatively well known in their historical contexts, and while much has been written about the Leveller movement in general, there have been almost no attempts to synthesize the political thought of Overton, who was one of the most prominent and influential political pamphleteers of the time.[4]

The purpose of this study is to partially make up for this. I shall attempt to distill the basic elements of Overton's political philosophy with an analytical rather than a historical perspective. The focus, in other words, is not upon the well-documented circumstances of Overton's writings, nor upon the political program of the Leveller movement as a whole. Rather, I will attempt to link the different elements together more systematically Overton did himself.[5]

To do so is both easy and difficult. While his writings have been preserved in abundance, nowhere did Overton set forth his political philosophy at any length. Nonetheless, from the large

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[4]There seems to be no lengthy work dealing exclusively with Overton in his native tongue; the only major work is Gimelfarb-Brack, *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité, Justice!*, which is in French and primarily historical and biographical. However, a small number of scholarly articles or sections of larger works focus on Overton's life and writings, his political thought, and his place among the Levellers, e.g., Carl Watner, "'Come What, Come Will!' Richard Overton, Libertarian Leveller," *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 4, no. 4 (Fall 1980); and Gimelfarb-Brack, "Richard Overton (fl. 1631–1664)."

[5]I am assuming that Overton did not change his opinions significantly during the years in which he wrote, i.e., that his expressions of ideas may be seen as different formulations of the same underlying philosophy. This is risky, since we all change our ideas over time, but, given the radical character of the ideas and the relatively short time span (three to four years) in which they were set out by a man of mature years, I believe this to be reasonable.

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number of pamphlets, tracts, and published editorials attributed to his pen, written alone or in collaboration with his ideological allies and published anonymously or openly, one may reconstruct the basics of his political philosophy. For what at first may seem simply a number of loosely connected polemics with scattered opinions on various political subjects peculiar to England of the 1640s under closer investigation comes to life as a surprisingly comprehensive, systematic, and radical doctrine.

Furthermore, I will offer something of a reinterpretation of the implications of Overton's political thought. Overton and the Levellers have usually been seen, both by their contemporaries and by historians, as espousers some form of redistributionist–egalitarian ideology, closely related to the so-called "Diggers." Yet, the picture emerging from the investigation is, rather, that Overton should be seen as espousing a combination of Natural Law and an individualism in the form of an early radical liberalism, or what in contemporary terms would be called "libertarianism," "classical liberalism," or, indeed, "Lockean liberalism."

Natural Law, Self-Ownership, and Natural Rights

The foundation of Overton's political philosophy is found in his emphasis on the claim prevalent in the Natural Law thinking of the time, that the application of reason is the necessary basis of human knowledge. In this respect, Overton stood squarely planted in both classical and modern Natural Law thinking. This emphasis, present already in his first work, *Man's Mortallitie*,[6] and probably fueled by his religious Anabaptism, was no doubt the foundation of both his religious beliefs and his political thought, for it was ultimately upon this trust in reason that Overton grounded his belief in the natural freedom of man.[7]

[6][Richard Overton?], *Man's Mortallitie [, or A Treatise Wherein 'tis proved, both Theologically and Phylosophically, that whole Man, (as a rationall Creature) is a compound wholly mortall, contrary to that common distinction of Soule and Body]*, January 19, 1644.

[7]Cf. William Haller, ed., *Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution, 1638–1647*, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), p. 97; Henry N. Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution*, ed. Christopher Hill (London: Cresset Press, 1961), pp. 49–57.

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Natural Law and the Principles of Right Reason

For Overton, the human faculty of reason is both the *differentia* which separates human beings from animals (and thus makes individuals what they are) and the tool according to which good and bad, right and wrong, and, hence, the principles of morality and the rights of individuals, must be discovered. Enlightened reasoning on the nature of things informs human beings which courses of action are morally appropriate and which are not, and, thus, is the standard against which both particular actions and the rules of society must be evaluated. This, again, leads to the requirement that earthly "laws" necessarily must be in accordance with the dictates of right reason if they are to be just. The essence of this Natural Law foundation of the principles of morality and justice is particularly clear in the pamphlet *An Appeale*:

> [Reason is that] which gives an equitable Authority, life and being to all just Lawes, presidents and formes of Government whatsoever, for Reason is their very life and spirit, whereby they are all made lawful and warrantable both for Settlement, Administration and Obedience; which is the highest kind of Justification and Authority for humaine Actions that can be; for greater is that, which gives Being and justifieth, then that which receiveth and is justified: All Formes of Lawes and Governments may fall and passe away; but right Reason (the fountain of all justice and mercy to the creature) shall and will endure for ever; it is that by which in all our Actions wee must stand or fall, be justified and condemned.[8]

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[8]Richard Overton, *An Appeale [: From the Degenerate Representative Body, the Commons of England assembled at Westminster. . . .]*, London, July 10, 1647. Reprinted in Don M. Wolfe, ed., *Leveller Manifestoes of the Puritan Revolution* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1944), p. 158.

Cf. "[L]et them do as much against me by the Rule of Equity, Reason, and Justice for my Testimony and Protestation against them in this thing as possibly they can, and I shall be content and rest." Richard Overton, *A Defiance [Against All Arbitrary Usurpations or Encroachments, either of the House of Lords, or any other, upon the Soveraignty of the Supreme House of Commons . . .]*, August 17, 1646, p. 6.

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If, on the other hand, an action is contrary to right reason, it is correspondingly unjustified, for while right reason may inform us what we ought to do, it can also inform us what we ought not do:

> [N]either Morality nor Divinity amongst Men can or may transgresse the limits of right reason, for whatsoever is unreasonable cannot be justly tearmed Morall or Divine, and right reason is only commensurable and discernable by the rule of merciful Justice and just mercy. . . . And upon this Principle, as upon a firme and sure foundation all just Lawes and Governments are founded and erected; and in particular, the fundamentall Lawes and Government of this Kingdome; for, it is a sure and radicall *Maxime* in our *Law*, *Nihil quod est contra rationem, est licium*, Nothing which is against reason is lawfull, *Reason* being the *very life* of the *Law of our Land*.[9]

The inspiration for Overton's doctrine, as for most other classical and early modern Natural Law thinkers, was the Christian religion. All the principles of right reason are, "as several Beames and Degrees of heat from the Body of the Sunne," ultimately derived and conveyed "from the Creator (the originall Fountaine) . . . [whose] communications are reasonable and just, and that what is so, is of God."[10]

An important point to note, though, is that Overton's doctrine of Natural Law, and subsequently of natural rights, is not justificationally dependent upon theological arguments. While Overton's doctrine may initially seem "creationist," it is certainly much less so than John Locke's, for instance. Overton may be seen as developing a doctrine of natural rights which not only relies *less* on the obligation of the individual to God than that of other early modern Natural Law theorists, but indeed is almost entirely secular.[11] For

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[9]*An Appeale*, pp. 158–59; italics in original. This seems to be Overton's fundamental legal principle: "*Nihil quod est contra rationem, est licitum,* Nothing which is against reason is lawful, it is a sure maxime in Law, for Reason is the life of Law."

[10]*An Appeale,* p. 158.

[11]Aylmer has stated the same point in an introductory note to *An Arrow*: "[Here] Overton develops a non-religious doctrine of natural rights as the basis of political rights. These rights are implanted in Man by Nature. While

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nowhere does Overton seem to have linked the duty to respect the dictates of right reason with the duty to respect God. Whenever Overton invoked God in his treatment of the principles of right reason, it was always indirectly, with the nature of the world and human beings being given by God, an otherwise "passive" deity, and not one who would punish human beings for not fulfilling their duty toward Him. If the duties dictated by right reason in any way indicate a duty toward God, it is at most so *indirectly*—with God being the creator of man, as He is supposed to be the creator of everything, which in turn is the reason why they have the rights they do: "[W]e are delivered of God by the hand of nature into this world . . . where of God by nature hath made him free."[12] The moral duties which an individual has are, accordingly, not based in an obligation toward God directly, but rather in a duty which he has to himself, given his nature as a rational being; it is, so to speak, a duty of man to Man.[13] Only in this sense are the moral principles of nature linked to God; otherwise, Overton repeatedly distinguished between the principles of morality and those of divinity.[14]

God is the creator of Nature, and so their indirect author, no particular theology—Christian or other—and certainly no doctrine of Rev-elation, is required in order to accept these premises. It would be unwise, on the evidence available, to portray Overton as a sceptic or materialist in the modern sense, and toleration was certainly of great importance to him. Yet his political principles do seem to owe less to his religious convictions than in the case with Lilburne and perhaps—initially at least—with Walwyn." Gerald E. Aylmer, Introduction to *An Arrow [Against All Tyrants and Tyrany, shot from the Prison of Newgate into the Prerogative Bowels of the Arbitrary House of Lords, and all other Usurpers and Tyrants whatsoever]*, October 12, 1646, reprinted in Gerald E. Aylmer, ed., *The Levellers in the English Revolution* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1975), pp. 68–70; also Sharp, *The English Levellers*, pp. 54–72. On Overton's secular version of Natural Law, see also Iain Hampsher-Monk, "The Political Theory of the Levellers: Putney, Property, and Professor Macpherson," *Political Studies* 24, no. 4 (December 1976): 413.

[12]*An Arrow*, p. 3.

[13]See *An Arrow*, p. 4.

[14]See *An Appeale*, p. 158. Overton made a distinction between the separate areas or origins of duties when he spoke of duties ordered "either by

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That the doctrine is secular in this sense is clear from the way in which Overton enumerated what he considered the primary "principles of right reason" (or "laws of nature"). The underlying principle of right reason is that the dictates and principles of reason are superior to all other dictates, but he also identified at least three specific principles which he considered universally true and binding on all human beings, that is, on all individuals possessing the faculty of reason. These principles may be summarized as follows: (1) that individuals have a right and a duty to seek their own self-preservation, (2) that they have a right to do so with the means necessary, and (3) that voluntariness and consent (within the limits of Natural Law) are the proper forms of interpersonal relationships. It is from these principles that the entire body of Overton's political thought follows deductively. But, more than that, the principles are, so to speak, summarized in and mediated through one central analytical concept which Overton called "self-propriety" or, as it will be called here, "self-ownership."[15]

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the Law of God, of Nature, Reason, or the just Lawes of the Land." See *An Appeale*, p. 184. But Overton seems also to have held the laws of nature, of reason, and of God as being essentially and ultimately the same. On this, see [Richard Overton?], *Regall Tyrannie [Discovered: Or A Discourse, shewing that all lawfull (approbational) instituted power by God amongst men, is by common agreement, and mutual consent]*, January 6, 1647.

[15]See Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution*, pp. 121, 260, and 461–62. For a good overview of the historical development of the concept of self-ownership in political theory, see Carl Watner, "The Proprietary Theory of Justice in the Libertarian Tradition," *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 6, nos. 3–4 (Summer–Fall 1982); also Carl Watner, "'Oh, Ye Are For Anarchy!': Consent Theory in the Radical Libertarian Tradition," *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 8, no. 1 (Winter 1986). For contemporary attempts to build a radical liberal political theory close to that of Overton on the concept of self-ownership, see Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974); also Murray N. Rothbard, *The Ethics of Liberty* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1982). For a Marxist attempt, see G.A. Cohen, *Self-ownership, Freedom, and Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). For a critique of the meaningfulness of the concept, see J.P. Day, "Locke on Property," in *Life, Liberty, and Property: Essays on Locke's Political Ideas* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing, 1971), pp. 117–21.

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Self-ownership and Self-preservation

The concept of self-ownership conceptualizes the unity and "wholeness" of the individual, the idea that one cannot, in terms of morality, separate an individual's personality from his reason, from his body, from his earthly life. In this sense, the concept denotes a sphere of autonomy within which an individual may act in a self-directed way without interference from others. As such, self-ownership loosely corresponds to what in previous Natural Law theorizing had been conceived of as that sphere in which individuals should act solely according to their own conscience, and into which no authority legitimately can trespass. But the idea was, conceptually, something of an original creation when Overton introduced it.[16] To understand the essence of the concept, one need consider only the following passage:

> To every Individuall in nature, is given an individuall property by nature, not to be invaded or usurped by any: for every one as he is himselfe, so he hath a *selfe propriety*, else could he not be himselfe, and on this no second may presume to deprive any of, without manifest violation and affront to *the very principles of nature*, and of the Rules of equity and justice between man and man; mine and thine cannot be, except this be: No man hath power over my rights and liberties, and I over no mans; I may be but an Individuall, enjoy *my selfe* and my *selfe propriety*, and may write my selfe no more then my selfe, or presume any further; if I doe, I am an encroacher & an invader upon an other mans Right, to which I have no *Right*. For by naturall birth, all men are equally and alike borne to like propriety, liberty and freedome, and as we are delivered of God by the hand of nature into this world, every one with a naturall, innate freedome and propriety (as it were writ in the table of every mans heart, never to be obliterated) even so are we to live, every one equally and alike to enjoy his Birth-right and priviledge; even all whereof God by nature hath made him free.[17]

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[16]Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution*, p. 260.

[17]*An Arrow*, p. 3, italics partly added. Parts of this paragraph also appear in *An Appeale*, p. 162. Overton used the concept of "self-propriety" on several occasions, implicitly or explicitly; it is, without doubt, the central

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To understand Overton's justification of the moral duties implied by the self-ownership of individuals, it is necessary to consider how self-ownership is related to what Overton considered to be the first principle of reason. This is that the individual by nature has a right to seek his own self-preservation, and a corresponding duty not to harm himself and to resist harm from others:

> [I]t is *a firme Law and radicall principle in Nature* engraven in the tables of the heart *by the finger of God* in creation of every living moving thing, wherein there is the breath of life to defend, preserve, award, and *deliver it selfe from all things hurtfull, destructive and obnoctious thereto to the utmost of its power*: Therefore from hence is conveyed to all men in generall, and to every man in particular, an *undoubted principle of reason*, by *all rational and just wayes* and meanes possibly he may, to save, defend and deliver himselfe from all oppression, violence and cruelty whatsoever, and (in duty to *his own* safety and being) to leave no just expedient unattempted for his delivery therefrom: and this is rationall and just; *to deny it, is to overturn the law of nature*, yea, and of Religion too; for the contrary lets in nothing but selfe murther, violence and cruelty.[18]

This duty to seek one's self-preservation is based on the fact that

> not *onely* Religion, and Reason, but even *Nature it self* doth bind every man to do according to his power, whom God hath inabled, and honoured with any talent or measure of abilities to that end.[19]

Indeed, to violate the principle of self-preservation, whether in one's behavior toward oneself or toward others, is not simply a sin against God but a sin against oneself—against one's nature as a human being:

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analytical concept in his political thought. See Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution*, pp. 121 and 140 n. 33. The fullest treatments are in *An Arrow*, pp. 3–4, and *An Appeale,* pp. 162–63. The concept may have been implicit as early as *Man's Mortallitie*, where Overton argued that soul and body is one.

[18] *An Appeale*, pp. 159–60, italics added.

[19] *A Defiance*, p. 2, italics added.

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> God the fountain of Reason and Justice, hath endued man with so much reason, mercy, humanity, and compassion to himself and his own Being, as by the instinct Nature to improve his utmost power for his own preservation and defence: which is a Law above all lawes and compacts in the world. . . . And whosoever reject it and doth not use it; hath obliterated the Principles of Nature in himselfe, & degenerated into a habit worse then a beast, and become felonious to himselfe, and guilty of his own blood.[20]

Overton's position is also clear from his view of capital punishment, which he supported, albeit only for murder:

> [Y]ea, though a man legally guilty of death should be condemned . . . *to cut his own throat*; yet were he in *equity* not *bound* thereunto, but in so doing should be *guilty* of his *own blood*. And the Law of our Land makes no man his own Executioner. . . . And the Law of God leaves it a matter out of all doubt and dispute, and *nature it selfe* teaches, that no man shall be his own Butcher or Executioner, for in so doing, he should *sin* against *his own* flesh, which is a thing most unnatural and inhumane.[21]

Overton found it morally imperative to seek self-preservation and resist harm from others because it is natural for individuals to do so:

> And this [self-preservation and liberty] *by nature* every one desires, aimes at, and requires, so no man naturally would be befooled of his liberty by his neighbours craft, or inslaved by his neighbours might, for *it is natures instinct to preserve it selfe*, from all things hurtfull and obnoctious, and this *in nature is granted to be most reasonable*, equall and just, not to be rooted out of the kind, even of equall duration with the creature.[22]

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[20] *Regall Tyrannie*, pp. 59–60.

[21] Richard Overton, *The Commoners Complaint [: or, A Dreadful Warning from Newgate, to the Commons of England. . . .]*, February 10, 1647. Reprinted in Haller, *Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution*, pp. 373–95; see pp. 378–79, italics partly added.

[22] *An Arrow*, pp. 3–4.

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In other words, Overton considered it natural for human beings to seek self-preservation, and, for that very reason, found it "good" to do so (and correspondingly "bad" not to do so).

Self-ownership, Liberty, and Property

Overton's second principle of reason, seemingly derivative from —or even implicit in—the first, is that it is legitimate to seek self-preservation by the means necessary to do so, no matter the context:

> [N]ecessity is a law above all lawes, and this principle [of reason] conveyeth and issueth forth authority and power, both to generall and particular cases, even to the taking up of unusuall and unexemplary courses for publique and particular deliverances, and yet such acts warrantable in, and by all sorts and societies of people whatsoever, and the actor or actors thereof justified thereby.[23]

It seems to follow logically from these two principles of reason that a human being has a natural right to liberty, i.e., to be free to do with himself and with material objects whatever is necessary for his self-preservation. This may, at first, seem identical to the view of Thomas Hobbes and certain other modern Natural Law theorists, but there are crucial differences in both the assumptions and the implications concerning the range and end of human self-preservation, and it would be a serious error to confuse them.

First and foremost, Overton differs from Hobbes as to what constitutes self-preservation. Overton did not provide a psychologistic argument for humans acting as hedonistic or egotistic stimulus-response machines incapable of doing anything but what their passions for pleasure and against pain determine. Quite the contrary, he argued in favor of the freedom of will, and left the door open for people acting both for their own sake and for the sake of others.[24] When he wrote that "every man by naturall instinct aiming

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[23]*An Appeale*, p. 160.

[24]Cf. "For I acknowledge that I was not born for my self alone, but for my neighbour as well as for my self." *A Defiance*, p. 5; "[N]o man is born for himself." *A Defiance,* p. 2. See also John Lilburn, William Walwyn, Thomas Prince, and Richard Overton, *A Manifestation [from Lieutenant Col.*

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at his owne safety and weale,"[25] Overton meant that it seems contrary to reason to suppose that a human being should deliberately act contrary to his own well-being and harm himself. Hence, it is natural for the individual to pursue those courses of action which he himself, by the aid of reason, considers good for him as a human being. Although Overton in his individualism is closer to Hobbes than to the Scholastics, for instance, he nonetheless builds on an ethical view of human beings closer to the teleological and eudaimonistic self-preservation-as-human-flourishing found in Aristotelian and Thomist thought than to the mere self-preservation-as-survival of Hobbes.

But, second, the self-preservation of which Overton spoke also differs in range from the self-preservation of which Hobbes spoke: it is "bounded" rather than unlimited. Hobbes did not operate with a conception even close to Overton's "self-propriety," and there are no moral limits to the quest for self-preservation by Hobbesian individuals except that which is conducive to this pursuit itself. Yet, since Overton did not, as did Hobbes, hold that it was impossible for human beings to act contrary to a passion for survival, he needed some natural limits as to what would be legitimate self-preservation. The answer was that individuals should seek their own self-preservation only within the limits of self-ownership, so that "[n]o man hath power over my rights and liberties, and I over no mans."[26] For the right and duty of the individual to seek self-preservation naturally entails a reciprocal duty to respect the similar right of others, who also possess self-ownership:

> I'le not sell my birth-right for a mess of pottage, for Justice is my naturall right, my heirdome, my inheri-

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John Lilburn, Mr. William Walwyn, Mr. Thomas Prince, and Mr. Richard Overton: (Now Prisoners in the Tower of London) And others, commonly (though unjustly) styled Levellers. . . .], April 14, 1649; Reprinted in Wolfe, *Leveller Manifestos of the Puritan Revolution*, pp. 388–96; in William Haller and Godfrey Davies, ed., *The Leveller Tracts, 1647–1653* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), pp. 276–84; in Aylmer, *The Levellers in the English Revolution*, pp. 151–58; and in Sharp, *The English Levellers*, pp. 158–67.

[25] *An Appeale*, p. 162.

[26] *An Arrow*, p. 3.

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> tance *by lineall descent from the loins of Adam*, and so to *all the sons of men as their proper right without respect of persons*. The crooked course of Favour, greatnesse, or the like, is not the proper channell of Justice; *it is pure, and individuall, equally and alike proper unto all*, descending and running in that pure line streaming and issuing out unto all, though grievously corrupted, vitiated, and adulterated from generation to generation.[27]

Overton thus found the moral boundaries set by self-ownership as little different from the Christian ethic. In an argument resembling Kant's transcendental argument for the Categorical Imperative, Overton states that "seing nature teacheth me to defend my self, and preserve my life; Reason telleth me in the Negative, that it is but just, that I should not doe that unto another, which I would not have another doe to me."[28] Accordingly,

> [N]o more may be communicated then stands for the better being, weale, or safety thereof [i.e., of the individual]: and this is mans prerogative and no further, so much and no more may be given or received thereof: even so much as is conducent to a better being, more safety and freedome, *and no more*; *he that gives more, sins against his owne flesh; and he that takes more, is a Theife and Robber to his kind*: Every man by nature being a King, Priest and Prophet in his owne naturall circuite and compasse, whereof *no second may partake, but by deputation, commission, and free consent from him, whose naturall right and freedome it is*.[29]

When Overton spoke of his second principle of reason, he stress-ed its radicalism while adding an important qualification regarding the rights of others:

> [I]n pursuance of the just and necessary *defensive Opposition* we may lawfully, and are in Conscience bound to destroy, kill and slay the otherwise irresistable enemy *for our own preservation and safety* whether *in our lives, our Lawes or our liberties*."[30]

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[27] *A Defiance,* p. 6.

[28] *Regall Tyrannie*, p. 9.

[29] *An Arrow*, p. 4, italics added.

[30] *An Appeale*, pp. 177–78, italics partly in original.

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In other words, the individual is not morally permitted to do whatever he wants to another individual. In his pursuit of self-preservation, the individual is allowed only to use the violence necessary for his defense, and allowed only to do so in order to defend his self-ownership and the rights which flow from it.[31]

Accordingly, one needs to put substance into what constitutes these rights which nobody may violate, and which everybody has both a right and a duty to defend. Overton's concept of self-ownership enters the picture here, for it is by way of this concept that Overton's view of the liberty and natural rights of individuals can and must be understood. The individual has a natural right to exercise self-ownership, and either others respect that right, or they do not. If they do, then one is in a condition of liberty, otherwise not, and, accordingly, a condition of liberty is an "either–or." Overton saw "liberty" and "coercion" (or "bondage") as fundamentally opposed and mutually exclusive concepts and ways of human interaction: "[F]reedom and tyranny are contraries, that which representeth the one, doth not represent the other."[32] This is because "one be so destructive to the Being of other, that, where the one is, the other cannot be."[33]

However, Overton does not explicitly define exactly what is to be understood by "liberty" or "freedom." Nonetheless, given his contrasting of liberty and coercion, he most likely agreed with his collaborator Lilburne's "negative" definition, namely that liberty exists when "no man be questioned or molested or put to answer for anything but wherein he materially violates the person, goods or good name of another." In this way, Overton is almost equating liberty, rights, and property, particularly since he used the latter concept in what has been called an "extended sense."[34] For the

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[31]See Richard Overton, *Certaine Articles [for the Good of the Common Wealth. . . .]*, July 17, 1647. Reprinted in Wolfe, *Leveller Manifestos of the Puritan Revolution*, pp. 189–95; in Aylmer, *The Levellers in the English Revolution*, pp. 82–87.

[32]*An Appeale*, p. 169.

[33]*The Commoners Complaint*, p. 375.

[34]See Peter Laslett, introduction to *Two Treatises of Government*, by John Locke, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988),

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"property" of which Overton spoke, especially in *An Arrow* and *An Appeale*, is clearly not limited to the individual's own person, narrowly understood, nor is it limited to physical objects. Rather, the principle of self-ownership is identical to the right to "life, liberty and property," as when Overton spoke of the individual's "own liberty or property, either in person, goods, or estate."[35] Liberty is the right to act in a self-directed way with what is one's property. Or, in more practical and political terms, the "negative" definition of liberty may be equated with a "positive" right to

> Liberty of conscience in matters of Faith, and divine worship; Liberty of the Person, and liberty of Estate: which consists properly in the propriety of their goods, and a disposing power of their possessions.

The principle of self-ownership and the natural right to liberty thus entail the right of the individual to dispose freely of his person, his labor, and his legitimately acquired goods.[36]

But what are legitimately acquired goods? Overton nowhere at any length developed a theory of how to acquire possessions, although it would be unfair to claim that he was completely without one; at most, he did not find it necessary or opportune to develop

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pp. 101–3; Gordon Schochet, introduction to *Life, Liberty, and Property: Essays on Locke's Political Ideas* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1971), p. 5.

[35]*A Defiance*, p. 9.

[36]At the risk of over-interpreting typesetting errors, I believe one may see an implicit distinction between Overton's use of the terms "propriety" and "property." He apparently uses "property" as a synonym for "estate" or "goods" (i.e., material property), while "propriety" seems to refer to the self-propriety (i.e., self-ownership) of individuals, their individuality and rationality, their rights to dispose of themselves *and* to acquire and exchange physical property. If one does not notice this distinction, a number of confusions could arise, such as when Overton states, in *An Arrow*, p. 3, that each individual is born to and with equal propriety. This refers, of course, not to the belief that each individual is born holding equal property, but having equal rights to exercise the liberty to acquire and exchange property. Hampsher-Monk, "The Political Theory of the Levellers," pp. 410–12, makes a fundamentally similar distinction and interpretation on the same basis, although he—mistakenly, I believe—concludes that "property" only refers to "conventional" and not "natural" rights.

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it at length. For Overton, the right to acquire, possess, and exchange material property follows immediately and logically from the dual principles of reason, that individuals have a duty to seek self-preservation, and that they have a right to do so with the means necessary as long as they do not violate the rights of others. This naturally points toward a theory of acquisition, but it should also be noted that Overton did not subscribe to a so-called occupation theory of acquisition, as espoused by Hugo Grotius, for example. For Overton, the right to property is a natural right which follows from the nature of human beings, and is not something dependent upon consent from others. Furthermore, any occupation theory of acquisition would seem to conflict severely with his normative analysis of the oppression of the English people since the Norman invasion. Finally, and most importantly, Overton seems to embrace what later would be called a labor theory of acquisition, for he stated that self-ownership is a principle by which one

> would do as you would be done unto, that would have your neighbour *injoy the fruit of his own labour, industry, and sweat of his brow*, the freedom of his Conscience and *estate*, his own naturall right, and property, and have none to invade or intrench upon the same, more then you would have upon your own.[37]

Self-Ownership, Inalienability, and Consent

The concept of self-ownership "positively" conceptualizes the principles of reason, which hold that human beings ought to further their self-preservation, and that they have the right to do so freely with their own persons, their labor, and the goods they can produce and exchange with others. Simultaneously, the concept "negatively" sets out the corresponding limits to this pursuit, namely by stressing that only consent-based interpersonal relations are morally justified.

Moreover, this concept of self-ownership also embodies particular elements that in turn make it the central analytical concept in Overton's political thought, especially when seen in conjunction

[37] *A Defiance*, p. 5.

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with his rationalist principles. As should be clear by now, Overton's underlying principle of reason is that the dictates of right reason are justificationally antecedent and superior to earthly legislation; in other words, Natural Law supersedes statute:

> The equity of the Law is Superiour to the Letter, the Letter being subordinate and subject thereto. . . . Yea, if the Law should comptroule and overthrow the equity, it is to be comptrouled and overthrowne it selfe, and the equity to be preserved as the thing, only legally, obligatory and binding.[38]

Similarly, the third principle of reason, according to Overton, is what might be called the sanctity of contract, which finds that contracts entail mutual obligations. When one party breaks a relationship entered into by consent, the other party is relieved from fulfilling its part of the contract: "All betrusted powers if forfeit, fall into the hands of the betrusters, as their proper centure: and where such a forfeit is committed, there is disoblegeth from obedience."[39]

Both principles are ultimately connected to a particular aspect of Overton's concept of self-ownership, inherent in the duty of self-preservation, which he repeatedly stressed as central: that self-own-ership itself is "inalienable." An individual cannot—even voluntarily—give up his natural rights and, for instance, enslave himself.[40] Of course, Overton did not claim that a human being cannot, in writing or words, promise to submit to the will of another, nor that it is *de facto* impossible for some to enslave others to enforce such a promise of self-alienation through the use of force.

So what did Overton intend to say when he argued that self-ownership is inalienable, and what was his justification? Unfortunately, the often short and polemic nature of Overton's writing did not leave room for elaborate philosophical arguments. Given this, Overton could be making the argument that since human beings by

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[38] *An Appeale*, p. 161.

[39] *An Appeale*, p. 162.

[40] See *An Arrow*, p. 4; *An Appeale*, p. 163; and *Regall Tyrannie*, p. 11.

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nature have the faculty of reason and free will (from which self-ownership and the principles of reason follow), they as a matter of fact cannot—even if they desire to—alienate this faculty, since it is exactly that faculty which makes them human. As long as individuals *de facto* possess the faculty of reason, they *de jure* possess the right of self-ownership. This may be seen by contrasting the "property" that one has in one's person with the property one has in material goods. One can give away, sell, or otherwise dispose of one's physical property, and one can even alienate parts of one's body, and while one may later regret this, these objects are no longer in one's possession. But one cannot alienate one's reason or will itself, and, accordingly, any promise or contract to do so is automatically void, according to Natural Law.

Furthermore, from a normative perspective, individuals also ought not to alienate their self-ownership since this would be contrary to self-preservation in a self-directed manner, and, as already shown, the first and second principles of nature dictate that individuals have a right and duty to seek self-preservation. By attempting to alienate their self-ownership, for instance, through a "slave contract," individuals would violate what is both a command of God and a law of nature: "[F]or as by nature, no man may abuse, beat, torment, or afflict himselfe; so by nature, no man may give that power to another, seeing he may not doe it himselfe."[41] To voluntarily or passively

> subject to slavery, or to be a slave, is to degenerate from his Originall, and Primitive institution of Man into the habit of a Beast, upon whom God never bestowed that stile and honour of being creatures created in the Image of their Creator.[42]

Accordingly, to do so, even with one's consent, would be as much a violation of the principles of reason as would the acquisition of someone else's property (without that person's consent). In both cases, it would amount to theft:

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[41] *An Arrow*, p. 4, italics added. An identical formulation appears in *An Appeale*, p. 163.

[42] *Regall Tyrannie*, p. 11.

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> Why therefore shall I crave my own, or beg my right? to turn supplicant in such a case is a disfranchising of my self, and an acknowledgement that the thing is not my own, but at another mans pleasure; so that I forsake and cast off my property, and am inslav'd to his arbitrary pleasure: if the other will, I may have possession, otherwise not. Which indignity to my own . . . rights. . . ; for it is no better then a branch of tyranny to force a man to turn supplicant for his own, and of self-robbery to submit thereto.[43]

Even if an individual attempts to alienate his self-ownership, by contracting himself into submission, for instance, it follows from the principles of reason that he has a right to resist the enforcement of such a contract.

In this manner, by setting out what individuals ought to do (seek self-preservation) and what they ought not to do (violate another's liberty), the notion of self-ownership as inalienable in reality provides the foundation for a radically consent-based social philosophy. If an individual in pursuit of self-preservation freely and non-coercively consents to an interpersonal relationship with one or more other individuals, then this carries with it a moral weight and sets moral boundaries that nobody can legitimately transgress. On the other hand, relationships based on coercion or other elements contrary to reason are illegitimate, and may and ought to be resisted.[44]

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[43] *A Defiance*, p. 6.

[44] I differ on several counts with other interpreters' formulations of Overton's concept of self-ownership, first and foremost "possessive individualism" as described by Crawford B. Macpherson in *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962). Briefly stated, I believe that while Macpherson correctly focuses on the notion of self-ownership as central and as signifying a "property" in one's own person, he fails to understand the sense in which this is "inalienable." One can "alienate" one's possessions and sell one's labor, but this is not identical to alienating one's self-ownership, which is reason and the ability to use one's person. Accordingly, Macpherson's interpretation of the Levellers' view of the franchise, which is built on his interpretation of the Levellers as excluding people who sell their labor on the grounds that they have alienated their self-ownership, is flawed. In "The

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THE NATURE OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY

Overton built his political doctrine upon this foundation of Natural Law and natural rights. From this foundation, it follows naturally that all human relationships have to respect the laws of nature, specifically the rights of individuals to life, liberty, and property, and, accordingly, that only institutions and organizations based upon voluntary relationships can be considered legitimate.

Thus, Overton and his fellow Levellers suggested something almost identical to what today would be called political contractarianism. But it is correct that "the Levellers were practical thinkers who felt no interest in prehistoric man and the origin of society; it was the present that concerned them."[45] It is also correct that the Leveller view that earthly institutions ought to comply with Natural Law, as well as a number of their more specific positions —e.g., that monarchy historically was and ought to be, at best and if at all, elective, with the king owing loyalty to his oath to his subjects—were not peculiar to them. Furthermore, it is also true that neither Overton nor the other Levellers used such a term as "state-of-nature," or had elaborate theories of the forms of a "covenant" or "social contract." Nonetheless, a close inspection of Overton's writing, going beyond the polemic and rhetoric, reveals that he did, in fact, advocate a distinctly contractarian view of what should be considered the legitimate foundation and purpose of political authority. An attempt to reconstruct this view follows.

The Basis of Political Authority

Overton did not explicitly use the concept of a "state-of-nature," but he did use a number of basically identical concepts, for

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Political Theory of the Levellers," Hampsher-Monk understands this, but in an otherwise brilliant analysis, does not quite capture the originality of Overton's concept of self-ownership. Specifically, Hampsher-Monk seems to think that Overton considered only self-ownership natural, while property rights in material objects are "conventional." In other words, while he correctly understands Overton's notion of self-ownership, he fails to appreciate that property rights are but a natural extension thereof.

[45]Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution*, pp. 117–18.

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instance, "mutuall society," the "fundamentall originall" situation, and the "body naturall" (or "naturall body"). These all signify situations where human beings are conceived "by nature," and "God by nature hath made him free."[46] Throughout his writing, Overton described the nature of individuals as that which obtains in the absence of oppression, when they enjoy the natural rights which derive from their right to self-ownership. In such a situation, people enjoy their "natural liberty," are "naturally of themselves noble and free,"[47] and are governed only by their adherence to the laws of nature and consensual relationships. For instance, this is the case if a government ceases to exist, and its authority thereby returns to "the fundamentall originall, rise and situation thereof, which is the people."[48] Overton sees this concept of a "fundamental" and "original" situation as one conceptually akin to a state-of-nature, a situation where oppression is absent, and full authority resides in the individuals themselves.[49]

In this way, Overton confronts the nature of society through a radical individualism that should be applied both for the understanding of phenomena and for their legitimization, an individualism both methodological and moral. Overton continually stressed that, in reality, even legislation and government are nothing but the individuals of which they are constituted, and simultaneously that

> no more can be communicated to the generall, then is included in the particulars whereof the generall is compounded; for that were to goe beyond it selfe, for Being to goe beyond the power of being, which is impossible.[50]

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[46]*An Arrow*, p. 3.

[47]*A Defiance*, p. 1.

[48]*An Appeale*, p. 162.

[49]See, e.g., *An Arrow*, passim. Also see Richard Ashcraft, *Locke's Two Treatises of Government* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987), p. 162.

[50]*An Appeale*, p. 163. Almost identical phrasing appears in *An Arrow*, p. 4. It should be pointed out that methodological individualism and moral individualism are not identical doctrines, although they are closely related; both entail that the whole cannot have any properties not derived from its parts. Methodological individualism holds that social phenomena can be understood only through the actions of individuals and the mean-

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Adopting such a principle, and given the principle of self-own-ership, it follows that institutions and organizations cannot have any rights or authority but those possessed by the individuals constituting them. This must necessarily be so for all legitimate authority:

> [A]ll just humain powers take their original; *not immediatly from God* (as Kings usually plead their prerogative) but *mediatly by the hand of nature*, as *from the represented to the representors*; for originally, God hath *implanted* them *in* the creature, and from the creature those powers *immediatly proceed*; and *no further*.[51]

From this follows—as dictated by Overton's third principle of reason—that all human institutions, including such human creations as legislation and governments, must necessarily respect Natural Law in the same way as the individuals who make them up are supposed to do. Accordingly, in the "fundamental" and "original" situation, all—and only all—the individuals together compose a "body naturall,"[52] and only their unanimous consent and adherence to Natural Law can create political authority:

> So . . . amongst the Sons of Men, that live in mutuall society one amongst another in nature and reason, there is none above, or over another, against mutuall consent and agreement, and all the particulars or individuals knit and joined together by mutuall consent and agreement, becomes a Soveraign Lord and King, and may create or set apart for the execution of their Lawes . . . Officers, which we call Magistrates, and limit them by what rules they judge convenient; alwayes provided they be consonant to the Law of God, Nature and Rea-

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ings they attach to these. It follows, therefore, that all organizations and institutions should be seen as nothing but the composite of the actions of individuals. Moral individualism holds that no group or social entity can have any moral rights, obligations, or authority other than those derived from individuals. Overton clearly, albeit often implicitly and less-than-carefully, subscribed to both of these principles. For examples of his methodologically individualist analysis of political authority, see *An Arrow*, p. 11; *The Commoners Complaint*, pp. 378–79; *An Appeale*, p. 162.

[51] *An Arrow*, p. 4, italics added.

[52] See *An Appeal*, pp. 178–79.

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> son by the force of which, it is not lawfull for any man to subject himself to be a slave.[53]

Thus, at first and speaking in general terms, Overton's views on the purpose and legitimacy of political authority stand safely planted in the classical Natural Law doctrine: the purpose and justification of political authority is its pursuit of the common good. Yet, under closer consideration, it becomes clear that Overton's radical individualism points toward not only a radical but also an innovative way of approaching questions of social and political theory: it represents a distinctively "individualist turn" in the focus of Natural Law theorizing.[54] For although Overton, like other Natural Law theorists, sees the common good as the purpose of political authority, it should be noted that this is described exclusively in terms of the good of individuals. Just as individuals naturally seek their own well-being, so the power given to political authority, and the purpose of having it at all, is "to be employed to no other end, then our owne well-being," to "to deliver us from all kind of Bondage, and to preserve the Common-wealth in Peace and Happinesse."[55] More specifically, both the purpose of and limit upon political authority is the observance of Natural Law as expressed in common law:

> The publike *safety* and *liberty* of the *people* is the maine end of all Government, and Governours, whether Regall, Parliamentarie, or other; and the Law of the Land

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[53]*Regall Tyrannie*, p. 11, italics added.

[54]On the "individualist turn" made by Overton and Lilburne as compared with their contemporaries, see Theodore C. Pease, *The Leveller Movement: A Study in the History and Political Theory of the English Great Civil War* (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1965), pp. 131–53. As Brailsford described it for the Levellers in general: "What was original in their view of the social contract was that they analysed society—present-day society—into the individuals who composed it and then enquired on what terms they conferred on their representatives the right to govern them." See Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution*, p. 118.

[55][Richard Overton and William Walwyn?], *A Remonstrance [of Many Thousand Citizens, and Other Free-Born People of England, to Their Own House of Commons. . . .]*, July 7, 1646. Reprinted in Haller, *Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution,* pp. 353–70; in Wolfe, *Leveller Manifestores of the Puritan Revolution,* pp. 113–30; and in Sharp, *The English Levellers,* pp. 33–53.

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> usually called the *Common-Law*, being grounded upon right reason and equity, the true Rule and Directory, both for ruling and obeying.[56]

The more radical implications of Overton's doctrine become apparent when we realize exactly what Overton meant by the protection of the safety and liberty of the people: "Now our safety and protection lieth in the full and just enjoyment of our Lawes, our Rights, and Freedomes, and delivery from bondage and thraldome,"[57] and, for Overton, "law," properly understood, "respecteth nothing more then the Liberty and Freedome of a mans person."[58] Accordingly, following Overton's Natural Law doctrine, governments can serve one and only one purpose, namely, that of securing the natural rights of individuals to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness, and they can perform actions only to the extent that they aim to secure these rights:

> All *State-Deprivation* of life, limbe, goods, liberty or freedome, either is, or should be, all and every particle thereof, the just execution of the *Law executing*: For in Equity, the Action executing is indivisible from the Law, and only & precisely proper thereto, and not at all to the party executed.[59]

The Limits of Political Authority

Why should protection of the rights to life, liberty, and property be the only purpose of political authority? And why should only a political authority based on unanimous and revocable con-

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[56]Richard Overton [Mary Overton, pseud.], *[To the Right Honourable, the Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses, the Parliament of England, assembled at Westminster,] the Humble Appeale and Petition [of Mary Overton, prisoner in Bridewell]*, March 24, 1647, p. 1, italics partly added. See also *A Remonstrance*, pp. 114–15, 124, and 128; [Richard Overton?], *An Alarum [to the House of Lords: Against their insolent Usurpation of the Common Liberties, and Rights of this Nation. . . .]*, July 31, 1646, p. 9; and *An Arrow*, p. 4.

[57]*An Appeale*, pp. 173–74.

[58]*The Humble Appeale and Petition*, p. 2.

[59]*The Commoners Complaint*, p. 378.

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sent be considered legitimate? Overton's answer is manifold, complex, and not systematically articulated, but a partial reconstruction shows it to be a fundamentally contractarian argument based in the principles of Natural Law.

Overton never claimed that there had been an actual social contract in the sense of *de facto* political authority being instituted by explicit, joint, and common consent, made between citizens and a king. Indeed, he saw most of English history as being contrary to the political principles he advocated. Nonetheless, Overton embraced an explicitly contractarian doctrine when he repeatedly referred to the moral and legal relationship between citizens and government as being necessarily one of "trust," "contract," and "commission."[60]

For Overton, the legitimacy of political authority was not its origin, but the extent to which it performed what ought to be its role, namely, securing the universal and timeless natural rights of citizens in accordance with the laws of nature. Or, as he put it directly to the members of Parliament:

> [Y]ee were chosen to worke our deliverance, and to Estate us in *naturall and just libertie* agreeable to *Reason* and common *equitie*; for *whatever our Fore-fathers were*; or whatever they did or suffered, or were enforced to yeeld unto; *we are the men of the present age, and ought to be absolutely free from all kindes of exorbitancies*, molestations of *Arbitrary Power*, and you wee choose to free us from all without exception or limitation, either in respect of Persons, Officers, Degrees, or things; and we were full of confidence, that ye also would have dealt impartially on our behalf, and made us the most absolute free People in the world.[61]

This passage clearly demonstrates that Overton believed that despite the lack of an explicit contract, there necessarily exists a contractual relationship between the citizens and their government, whatever its form: "[t]here *is* a *contract* betwixt the King & his People; yea, and such a one, as ties up all his public official actions to be according unto Law, and not according to the rule of

[60]See *A Remonstrance*, p. 113; also *Regall Tyrannie*, pp. 33, 61–62, 99.

[61]*A Remonstrance*, pp. 114–15, italics partly in original.

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his own Will."[62] Specifically, Overton's argument was that the relationship between the citizens and the exercisers of political authority must necessarily proceed from the self-ownership of individuals: it can ultimately be based only upon the common consent of the citizens, its purpose must be the protection of the natural rights of the individuals, and it must be revocable.[63]

But why should this be the case when, in reality, the relationship was of a quite different character and origin? Overton's answer was that only such a relationship carries reason with it, and therefore is in accordance with Natural Law. To be in accordance with Natural Law, the relationship between citizens and government must necessarily be the "common consent or choyce of the People, the onely and alone Fountain of all just power on earth."[64] The relationship must accordingly—even if it did not have a contractual origin—take the form of an at least tacit contract, "that by vertue of his Induction into his Office, is Naturally and Rationally implyed to be made, althou it never be expressed."[65] Individuals *could not* legitimately give their consent to anything but such a relationship, and rational individuals *would not* give their consent to anything but this.

Ultimately, Overton's justification of this view of the relationship between individuals and their government is grounded in his argument that institutions consist only of those who make them up, and that their authority, accordingly, cannot exceed what is contained in the self-ownership of individuals, and that the relationship—since it is a relationship between individuals—is subordinate to the principles of reason. The existence of political authority, therefore, necessarily presupposes some empowerment by individuals, and since there are only two kinds of human interaction —consent and coercion—empowerment can be obtained only by one of these means. If through the latter, then it is clearly not legitimate, for it would be against the laws of nature. On the other

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[62] *Regall Tyrannie*, p. 33, italics added.

[63] See *An Alarum*, p. 3; also *An Appeale*, p. 162.

[64] *Regall Tyrannie*, p. 45.

[65] *Regall Tyrannie*, p. 61–62; cf. pp. 33 and 99.

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hand, if it derives through the former, then it must necessarily be a conditional delegation which is revocable.

That this must be the case is because of the inalienability of self-ownership. The first principle of reason dictates that individuals cannot promise to give up their self-directed pursuit of self-preservation, and be forced to keep such a promise. Furthermore, the third principle of reason states that Natural Law is superior to everything else, that the laws of nature are "above all lawes and compacts in the world."[66] Accordingly, individuals cannot sign themselves into complete obedience to an absolute sovereign, not even through a social contract, covenant, or compact. To do so would be to sign away the rights to life, liberty, and property, which would be contrary to the laws of nature:

> [N]ature it self doth abhor, that a man should betray spoyl or destroy himself either of life, limbe, or liberty . . . one that so doth, is guilty of no lesse then murther; and if so, then what are those, which force him to it?[67]

Accordingly, any such actual or hypothesized compact could not be legitimate. It follows from this that the relationship between citizens and the exercisers of political authority cannot be one in which citizens unconditionally surrender their self-ownership to an absolute sovereign, be it monarchical, aristocratic, or republican. The relationship can only be one of delegation, one in which individuals conditionally give up a part of their actual exercise of self-ownership.

But it also follows from Natural Law, specifically from Overton's first principle of reason, that individuals have a duty to seek self-preservation. Accordingly, the conditional delegation is be dependent upon those who delegate power doing so to promote their self-preservation, and those having been delegated power exercising it in accordance with the specific principles under which it is delegated. In other words, the purpose of political authority must be to secure, within the dictates of reason, the rights of the individual to life, liberty, and property, for the individuals themselves possess both the faculty of reason and natural rights. Given this,

[66] *Regall Tyrannie*, p. 59.

[67] *A Defiance*, p. 23.

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there cannot possibly be any necessity in or deeper justice to the creation of political authority but to secure these. Had people been able to secure peace and happiness in the absence of political authority, such as in a state-of-nature, political authority would neither be necessary nor justified. For political authority is only an artificial organization created by human beings:

> For wee might justly have done it our selves without you, *if we had thought it convenient*; choosing you (as Persons whom wee thought fitly qualified, and Faithfull,) for avoiding *some inconveniences*.[68]

Finally, it also follows from Overton's third principle of reason that the relationship between citizens and their government is terminated (or at least revocable) if one party violates its conditions. The empowerment of political authority must, in other words, be a contractual relationship, like that between a buyer and a seller of a service, in which one good is exchanged for the performance of an action. This relationship, accordingly, closely resembles what contemporary economic theories call a principal-agent relationship:

> Wee are your Principalls, and you our Agents; it is a Truth which you cannot but acknowledge: For if you or any other shall assume, or exercise any Power, that is not derived from our Trust and choice thereunto, that Power is no lesse then usurpation and an Oppression, from which wee expect to be freed, in whomsoever we finde it; it being altogether inconsistent with the nature of *just Freedome*, which yee also very well understand.[69]

In practice, these points necessitate "that there is a generall communication amongst men from their severall innate properties to their Elected Deputies for their better Being, Discipline, Government, Property, and Safety."[70] But this power, which political authority has, is and ought to be nothing but an extension of the self-ownership of the individuals constituting the particular society: "For effecting whereof [i.e., Peace and Happiness], we possessed you with the same Power that was in our selves to have done

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[68] *A Remonstrance*, p. 113, italics added.

[69] *A Remonstrance*, p. 113.

[70] *An Appeale*, pp. 162–63, italics added.

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the same."[71] Finally, the power with which individuals exercising self-ownership have empowered political authority is not alienated, "but a Power of trust, (which is ever revokable, and cannot be otherwise), and to be imployed to no other end, then our owne well-being."[72] Individuals, therefore, can only delegate authority—the exercise of self-ownership—to others conditionally. The condition is the protection of natural rights, and the delegation is revocable.

Finally, an additional reason why the relationship between citizens and exercisers of political authority must necessarily take this form is that this is the only form of arrangement that any rational individual could consent to:

> And can any *reasonable man* conclude, that *our protection and assistance* of them [the House of Commons], and their *protection and assistance* of us are not relatives, and one *dependent* on the other? For what is the reason, that we have engaged our lives and estates thus in their defence, but that they should be as faithfull a *protection* unto us.[73]

While some human beings could perhaps voluntarily give up their freedom, not every rational individual can give up his self-ownership. Accordingly, anything beyond a voluntary and revocable delegation of authority for the purpose of protection of natural rights would be unimaginable:

> Reason tells me . . . that no Soveraignty can justly be exercised, nor no Law rightfully imposed, but what is given by common consent, in which, every individuall is included.[74]

Popular Sovereignty and the Right of Rebellion

Overton built his case for what today would be called the "sovereignty of the people" and the right to rebellion against illegitimate authority upon this individualistic interpretation of the principles of Natural Law:

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[71] *A Remonstrance*, p. 113, italics added.

[72] *A Remonstrance*, p. 113, italics added.

[73] *An Appeale*, p. 173, italics partly in original.

[74] *Regall Tyrannie*, p. 10.

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> Power is originally inherent in the People, and it is nothing else but that might and vigour, which such and such a Society of men contains in it self, and when by such and such a Law of common consent and agreement, it is derived into such and such hands, God confirmes the Law: And so man is the free and voluntary author, the Law is the instrument, and God is the establisher of both.[75]

However, if government becomes oppressive, that is, if it exceed its natural role of protecting the natural rights of individuals, then its authority automatically and without conditions or procedures returns to the people, who, thus, find themselves in a situation where authority is dissolved into the "originall Law of Nature." Overton considered this nothing more than the logic of the third principle of right reason. In other words, Overton held that legitimate authority either resides in the people as a whole, as their individual self-ownership, or that it is delegated to a government under certain conditions as political authority:

> [When the authority of government ceases, it] is only to be found in the *fundamentall originall, rise and situation thereof*, which is *the people the body represented*; for though it ceaseth from the hands of the betrusted, yet it doth not, neither can it cease from its being, for Kings, Parliaments, &c. may fall from it, but it indureth for ever, for were this not admitted, there could be no lawfull redress in extremity. . . : it alwayes is either in the hands of the Betrusted or of the Betrusters, while the Betrusted are dischargers of their trust, it remaineth in their hands, but no sooner the Betrusted betray and forfeit their Trust, but (as all things else in dissolution) it returneth from whence it came, even to the hands of the Trusters: For *all just humaine powers are but betrusted, confer'd, and conveyed by joint and common consent.*[76]

The actual exercisers of political authority are supposed to be nothing more than the agents of the principals, those who have delegated power to them, and, if the agents fail to keep their part of the contract, it is automatically void. The agents are

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[75] *Regall Tyrannie*, p. 40–41.

[76] *An Appeale*, p. 162, italics added.

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> therewith *singly and only* impowred for their severall weales, safeties and freedomes, *and no otherwise*. . . . So that such deputed, are to the *Generall* no otherwise, then as a Schoole-master to a particular, to this or that mans familie, for as such as ones Mastership, ordering and regulating power, is *but by deputation*, and that *ad bene placitum*, and *may be removed* at the parents or Head masters pleasure, upon neglect or abuse thereof, and be center'd upon another.[77]

And the people, who, as individuals, do not have the right to give up self-ownership, cannot accordingly, either individually or as a whole, contract themselves into servitude. For the whole cannot possess properties which its parts do not have, and, since nobody may violate the self-ownership of himself or others, so it is with the people as a whole:

> Even so and no otherwise is it, with you our Deputies in respect of the Generall, it is in vaine for you to thinke you have power over us, to save us or destroy us at your pleasure, to doe with us as you list, be it for our weale, or be it for our wo."[78]

All delegated power "is meerly derivative and bounded within this tacit commission, to act only for the good of those that betrusted them, and not for their mischiefe in the least."[79]

The important question then becomes, what specifically would constitute such a breach of trust by political authority so as to automatically return power to the citizens? There are several natural limitations to this contractual entrustment of power. First of all, the delegation is not indefinite in time, but must be tested regularly through elections such as may be customary.[80] Second, power is to be delegated, according to Overton, not to specific persons, but to institutions; "legall Authority," for example, is explicitly conceived of as nothing but the "persons therein intrusted."[81] Accordingly, if

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[77] *An Arrow*, p. 4, italics partly added.

[78] *An Arrow*, pp. 4–5.

[79] *Regall Tyrannie*, p. 99.

[80] See *A Remonstrance*, p. 113.

[81] *The Commoners Complaint*, pp. 378–79.

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the persons no longer exercise authority in the appropriate manner, that is, in accordance with the natural rights of citizens, their authority ceases to be binding: "All authority is fundamentally seated in the office, and but ministerially in the persons; therefore, the persons in their Ministrations degenerating from safety to tyranny, their Authority ceaseth."[82]

When a government violates the rights of the people, and its authority returns to the very people whose rights it has violated, what does this mean, in practice? If the rights of individuals are natural, and thus belong to all, and if these rights are inalienable, and thus cannot be given up but only delegated with consent, then individuals who violate these rights are nothing but criminals, *even if they are a part of the government*. And since every individual has a natural right to refuse to submit to violations of his rights, so he has a right to refuse to submit to an oppressive government. But more than that, he also has an equally natural right to use force to defend his rights against violations by such a government:

> [T]he persons invaded and assaulted by such open force of Armes may lawfully arm themselves, fortifie their Houses (which are their Castles in the judgement of the Law) against them, yea disarme, beat, wound, represse and kill them in their just *necessary defense* of their own persons, houses, goods, wives and families, *and not be guilty of the least offense*.[83]

The right of an individual to defend himself against violations of his natural rights is, in other words, only limited by the extent to which it is necessary to defend the rights in question. The right also applies no matter who commites the violation, and no matter what authority they claim:

> Even so upon the same ground, and by the same rule, that opposition which is made by a particular man in his own necessary defence, against the assault or sudden hostility of certain other particular men upon his person, or house, without any Warrant or Magisteriall Authority for that their hostilitie, is by the Law of the Land

[82] *An Appeale*, p. 162.

[83] *An Arrow*, p. 9.

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> lawfull, justifyable and equall; and the others condemned, as illegall, unjust, unnaturall and barbarous. . . . [Such are] Murtherers, Theeves, and Robbers. For if assaulting of mens persons, invading and entring their houses, and taking what of their goods such men please, and that all by force of Arms, be simply a Magisteriall Act, then All theeves and murtherers are justified thereby; for their violence is without any Magisteriall Authority appearing: but by the Law it is therefore adjudged theft, murther, &c.[84]

Yet, for Overton, an innocent individual has not only the natural right to disobey and to resist a tyrannical government, but also the duty to do so. Even a guilty individual should not be forced to punish himself, since that would be acting contrary to his own nature, and, accordingly, an innocent individual who pays obedience to an unjust authority—no matter the degree and the context— is thereby violating his duty to himself. It follows from the first and second principles of reason that there is

> an inherent principle of nature, concording with the Commandement of God, for were not tyranny in it selfe resistable, then a man might lawfully murther himselfe or give power to another to be his Butcher, but in regard by the Law of God in nature and in his word both the one and the other is verily unlawfull, therefore such kind of inhumanity and tyranny is to be resisted both in proper person and otherwise, shall we therefore be so inhumane, so unnaturall and diabolicall, to destroy and murther our owne selves, we may as well execute our selves with our own hands, as give leave to others to be our murtherers, for the matter would be all one in the execution, it would only differ in the instrument; therefore if we may not take leave to our selves, nor give it to another, then wee must resist it in others as well as in our selves, for not *to hinder is to give leave.*[85]

Or, as Overton put it in the case of his own refusal to obey what he considered illegitimate authority:

> [M]y *rejection of carrying my own Body to the Goale*, was no other but the refusall to be my own Executioner

[84] *A Defiance*, pp. 9–10.

[85] *An Appeal*, p. 177, italics in original.

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> therein; for though it were not of that degree of cruelty and inhumanity to my own flesh, as to cut my own throat; yet was it of the same nature and kind. And therefore if the one must be condemned as unjust, illegall and unnaturall, so must the other in its kind, so that as I was not bound, with my hands to cut my own throat, so with my feete, I was not bound to carry my selfe to prison.[86]

In summary, Overton held that the individual has both a right and a duty to resist a government that violates his natural rights, even when this resistance is contrary to established statute law, if such a resistance is in accordance with the dictates of right reason.

This right of resistance against authority residing inalienable in the people could be interpreted—as indeed it was—as if Overton were an opponent of order, and a proponent of chaos and "anarchy." But this was not the case, especially considering Overton's defense of Natural Law and natural property rights, and his distinction between the institutions of society and the persons holding offices in those institutions. For, according to Overton, just actions are by definition in accordance with just law, namely common law, which he stated as "That Reason hath no president, for Reason is the fountaine of all just presidents."[87] Accordingly, "if this principle must be granted of, and obeyed by all, as by no rationall man can bee denyed," then violating statute law "if grounded upon right Reason is justifiable and warranted."[88] When this is kept in mind, it is clear why Overton saw himself as a protector of justice and civil society:

> [W]hile they [parliament] move in the Sphere of our safety, their motions are Parliamentary, legall, and authoritative, and to be obeyed, defended, and maintained, but on the contrary, the contrary must be concluded, for contraries have contrary consequents. For *there is a difference betwixt their Parliamentary, and their owne Personall capacity*, and their actions are answerably different; therefore, the rejection, disobedience, and resistance of their personall commands, is no rejection,

[86] *The Commoners Complaint*, p. 379, italics in original.

[87] *An Appeale*, p. 158.

[88] *An Appeale*, p. 158, italics in original.

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> disobedience, or resistance of their Parliament Authority: So that he that doth resist their personall commands, doth not resist the Parliament, neither can they justly be censured or esteemed as Traytors, Rebells, Disturbers, or Enemies to the State, but rather as *Preservers, Conservers, and Defenders thereof.*[89]

By stressing in this way both the rights and duties of individuals to resist oppressive governments, Overton may be seen as having been, in both theory and practice, one of the first advocates of popular sovereignty and the rights of rebellion. In fact, Overton, when he was addressing the arbitrary power of the House of Lords in particular and of government in general, foreshadowed one of the great heroes of the American Revolution, Patrick Henry. In doing so, Overton summarized the creed of the revolutionary:

> But if they transgress, and go beyond the bounds of rationality, justice, and equity, I shall to the utmost of my power make opposition and contestation to the last gasp of vital breath; and I will not beg their favor, nor lie at their feet for mercy; let me have justice, or let me perish.[90]

A Radical Liberal Reform Program

It is hardly necessary to stress the fact that Overton was a political radical. His doctrine—in particular his conception of a just society necessarily being based on the natural and inalienable rights of life, liberty, and property, and his views on the limits of political authority and the right of the people to rebel—constituted a quite radical political program. But how radical was he, and how does his doctrine translate into ideological terms?

An Emerging Analysis of History and Classes

Overton's views naturally led him to see society divided into two fundamentally opposed groups: those living by their own labor and peacefully and voluntarily interacting with their fellowmen, and those living through privileges granted them by political authority. In contemporary (especially in Marxist) terms, one

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[89] *An Appeale*, p. 174.

[90] *A Defiance*, p. 6.

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would most likely call this a "class analysis," but, apart from being more fragmented and less developed, Overton's "class analysis" departs from the Marxist in several important ways. First and foremost, Overton's theory of "classes" was radically individual, focusing on the rights of individuals, and seeing groups only as "classes" to the extent that they violated rights or had their rights violated. Second, Overton's class distinction was not in terms of economic or materially based inequalities, but in terms of the origin of social, political, and economic inequalities, specifically in the political origin hereof.

Specifically, Overton and other Levellers placed the beginning of the class division of their own society at the Norman Conquest in 1066: "[W]e remain under the Norman yoke of an unlawfull Power, from which wee ought to free our selves,"[91] a "Norman yoke of cruelty, oppression, and tyranny."[92] Overton and the Levellers saw the original Anglo-Saxons as a people forcefully invaded, oppress-ed, and enslaved by their Norman conquerors, and, accordingly, saw most property distributions and almost all institutions and legislation since then as products of the interests of the monarchy and its supporters in a judicial–ecclesiastical–aristocratic–military complex:[93]

> The History of our Fore-fathers since they were Conquered by the *Normans*, doth manifest that this Nation hath been held in bondage all along ever since by the policies and force of the Officers of Trust in the Common-wealth, amongst whom, wee always esteemed Kings the chiefest: and what (in much of the former-time) was

[91] *A Remonstrance*, p. 123.

[92] *A Defiance,* p. 2. This, the story of the "Norman Yoke," was popularized by Henry Parker in his *Jus Populi* (October 16th, 1644), which may have influenced Overton and Lilburne. See Wolfe, *Leveller Manifestos of the Puritan Revolution,* p. 5.

[93] See Aylmer, *The Levellers in the English Revolution,* p. 13. On the "Norman Yoke" in Overton's writings, see, e.g., *A Remonstrance,* pp. 113–14, 123–25, and 128; *A Defiance*, pp. 1–2; *The Commoners Complaint*, pp. 376–77, and 386–87; and *The Humble Appeale and Petition*, pp. 13. On the ruling classes of seventeenth-century England, see *An Alarum*, pp. 7–8.

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> done by warre, and by impoverishing of the People, to make them slaves, and to hold them in bondage, our latter Princes have endeavoured to effect, by giving ease and wealth unto the People, but withall, corrupting their understanding, by infusing false Principles concerning Kings, and Government, and Parliaments, and Freedoms; and also using all meanes to corrupt and vitiate the manners of the youth, and strongest prop and support of the People, the Gentry.[94]

Seen in this perspective, the fight of the radicals in the Civil War in general, and that of the Levellers in particular, was not simply a trivial legal question about whether authority resided with the monarch or with Parliament. Rather, it was "a crusade of Englishmen for the recovery of liberties which their fathers had held and lost."[95]

The only exception from this view of legislation—and that indeed only partly—in the Leveller-writings was the Magna Carta, "that little Remainder of Light."[96] The Magna Carta, together with Scripture, was the authority to which Overton most often referred:

> Magna Charta itself being but a beggerly thing, containing many markes of intollerable bondage, & the Lawes that have been made since by Parliaments, have in very many particulars made our Government much more oppressive and intollerable.[97]

According to Overton, those who controlled political power and exploited the people owed their position to the historical process of using political authority for their own purposes. In its origin, political power was simply physical power, but, over time, free-born Englishmen had been held in bondage through the continuous imposition of what Marx would have called "false class consciousness":

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[94]*A Remonstrance*, pp. 113–14.

[95]Pease, *The Leveller Movement,* p. 146.

[96]*An Alarum,* p. 6.

[97]*A Remonstrance*, p. 124. Among Overton's many references to the legal authority of the Magna Carta, see also *An Arrow*, pp. 7 and 9; *The Humble Appeale and Petition*, pp. 4ff and 10ff; and *An Appeale*, pp. 166–67. On Overton's and Lilburne's views of common law and Norman tyranny, see Pease, *The Leveller Movement,* pp. 131–53.

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> Yea, such hath been the misterious mischievous subtilty from generation to generation of those cunning Usurpers, whereby they have driven on their wicked designes of tyranny and Arbitrary domination, under the fair, specious, and deceitfull pretences of Liberty and Freedom, that the poore deceived people are even (in a manner) bestialized in their understandings, become so stupid, and grosly ignorant of themselves, and of their own naturall immunities, and strength too, wherewith God by nature hath inrich'd them, that they are even degenerated from being men, and (as it were) unman'd, not able to define themselves by birth or nature, more then what they have by wealth, stature, or shape, and as bruits they'l live and die for want of knowledge, being void of the use of Reason for want of capacitie to discern, whereof, and how far God by nature hath made them free.[98]

Despite the historical incompleteness of the analysis, the "myth of the Norman Yoke" does seem to capture some of the essences of the class division of English society in the seventeenth century. But, more than that, it provided to Overton and the Levellers an analytical tool with which to rationalize all violations of the natural rights of citizens as acts performed by the ruling classes in their own self-interest.[99] Overton did not use the term "ruling classes." Rather, he used "corrupt interests" as a common denominator for those exploiting the people through political authority.

Overton divided these corrupt interests into four groups. The first and foremost,[100] which throughout history had oppressed the

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[98]*A Defiance*, p. 2. For Overton's analysis of the clergy's vested interests, see *A Remonstrance*; cf. Pease, *The Leveller Movement,* p. 147.

[99]See *A Remonstrance*, pp. 124–27; and *An Alarum*, pp. 7–8.

[100]See *An Alarum,* pp. 7–8; also Richard Overton, John Lilburne, Thomas Prince, and William Walwyn, *An Agreement [of the Free People of England. . . .]*, May 1, 1649. Reprinted in Wolfe, *Leveller Manifestos of the Puritan Revolution,* pp. 400–10; in Haller and Davies, *The Leveller Tracts,* pp. 318–28; in Aylmer, *The Levellers in the English Revolution,* pp. 160–68; and in Sharp, *The English Levellers,* pp. 168–78. Also see *An Agreement*, p. 403. To be exact, Overton's emphasis in describing those abusing political power shifted now and then, according to the occasion, e.g., "*all Arbitrary Power*, in Kings, or Lords, or any other . . . the *Clergy*, the

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freeborn citizens of the country, was composed of the exercisers of hereditary power—the monarch and the peers—which, by necessity, was arbitrary and ultimately derived from conquest and exploitation.[101] The three other groups that Overton pointed out were those who benefited from the power arbitrarily exercised by the first, and the "deadly adversaries"[102] of any honest man. Specifically, the second group of "corrupt interests" was the clergy of the state church, which oppressed religious groups.[103] The third group was composed of those responsible for unfair judicial procedures, that is, the judges and

> the burthensome Society of Lawyers; that live upon the impoverishing of the industrious and laborious People . . . [and] have been forced upon this nation by Conquest, and continued against Reason, and the weale of the People.[104]

Finally, the fourth group was that of "all Monopolists, and engrossers of trade," that is, those benefiting at the expense of the consumers from the interventions and subsidies of the state.[105]

Judges, *Lawyers*, and *Monopolists*" (*An Alarum*, pp. 7–8); "the Kings, Lords, and Clergy" (*A Defiance*, p. 1).

[101]Overton stated that "their fellow Robbers, Rogues, and Theeves, the lineall issue, and progeny of which, the present House of Peers are," had subverted "the ancient manner of Parliaments, & the ancient Lawes and Liberties of Government of this Kingdome, and a Law innovated, and introduced, flowing meerely from the will of a Bastard, Thief, Robber, & Tirant." See *Regall Tyrannie,* pp. 86 and 92. Also: "[B]y what meanes some of you came by yours [titles of honour], is very uncertaine, but, this is certaine, that most of you gained no part of it your selves: and the common wayes your Auncesters gained it for you, was generally by adhering to Kings, in subduing and oppressing the *Commons*, or by pleasing their Lusts, Mallice, Revenge, or Covetousnesse; for so Histories manifest, and those that have been made Lords in our times, have been advanced by the same occasions." See *An Alarum,* p. 4; "Wee are resolu'd upon our Naturall *Rights* and *Freedoms*, and to be enslaved to none, how Magnificent soever, with Rotten Titles of Honour." See *An Alarum*, p. 6.

[102]*An Alarum*, p. 8.

[103]*An Alarum*, p. 7.

[104]*An Alarum*, p. 8.

[105]*An Alarum,* p. 8.

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Liberal Constitutionalism and Laissez-Faire

Historically, it was this society of privileges, and especially the Machiavellian policy first of the king and the House of Lords, later the House of Commons, and finally the Protectorate, that formed the background for Overton's and the Levellers' demands. Such policies had made whatever legitimate authority the government may have had cease, and, thus, the people of England, according to Overton, legally found themselves in a state-of-nature.

This led Overton and the Levellers to demand a new social contract based on the principles of Natural Law. Overton was indeed the first to make such a demand when, in an address to the House of Commons, he insisted that this should limit the nature of government so as to secure the people against arbitrariness:

> [T]he Lawes of this Nation are unworthy a Free-People, and deserve from first to last, to be considered, and seriously debated, and reduced to an agreement with common equity and right reason, which ought to be the Forme and Life of every Government.[106]

This led Overton and his collaborators to set out the very first written statement of principles for a constitutional government, *Certaine Articles*, which later was expanded in three proposed "Agreements."[107] Given Overton's radical individualism and the historical context, it is understandable that in these writings, he was most occupied with the negative definition of government, of setting out its natural limits by constitutionally limiting the role of government through a number of severe restrictions. In this way, Overton came to be a kind of grandfather to the declarations of human rights and liberal constitutionalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In terms of the fundamental legal rights of citizens, Overton favored basic legal equality and, therefore, fought against legal privilege, such as peerages and exceptions from legislation.[108] In

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[106]*A Remonstrance*, p. 124, italics partly added.

[107]See *An Agreement*.

[108]See *An Alarum*, pp. 3–4; *Certaine Articles*, pp. 192–93; and *An Agreement*, pp. 406–7.

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constitutional matters, this legal egalitarianism led Overton to advocate strict restrictions on any inflation of the rights of citizens and the limits on government set out in the Magna Carta, an extension of the franchise, a freely elected parliament as the supreme political authority, and annual elections to Parliament.[109] Accordingly, Overton was constitutionally opposed to a hereditary executive and a hereditary second chamber. He also opposed legislation being written in any language other than English.[110]

Overton's legal egalitarianism also naturally led him to demand a number of procedural rights and a strict observance of the rule of law, for instance, the right of the people to elect judges directly, the right of the accused to be presumed innocent until proven guilty, the right to trial by a jury of peers, the right not to be forced to self-incrimination, and the right not to be imprisoned without warrant or trial.[111] Overton insisted on restitution rather than retribution as a general principle in criminal matters, and, accordingly, advocated the right not to be imprisoned for crimes other than such as violence or theft, and specifically not for debt; the right not to be submitted to the death penalty for crimes other than murder; and the right of prisoners not to be submitted to cruel and unfair treatment.[112]

Overton quite evidently embraced a large number of specific rights similar to what today would be called "civil liberties," and these were not limited to procedural rights. Overton stood staunchly against such policies as: conscription and other forms of slavery;

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[109]See *An Arrow*, p. 7; *A Remonstrance*, pp. 127 and 129; *Certaine Articles*, p. 189; and *An Agreement*, pp. 402–4.

[110]See *A Remonstrance*; *An Alarum*; *An Arrow*, p. 6; and *Certaine Articles*, pp. 189 and 192.

[111]See *A Remonstrance*; *An Alarum*; *A Defiance,* pp. 8–9 and 12–26; *An Arrow*, p. 6; *Certaine Articles*, pp. 190–91; *An Agreement*, pp. 406–8; Richard Overton, John Lilburne, and Thomas Prince, *[The Picture of] The Councel of State [, Held forth to the Free People of England. . . .]*, April 4, 1649, reprinted in Haller and Davies, *The Leveller Tracts,* pp. 191–246.

[112]See *A Remonstrance*, p. 125; *A Defiance*, pp. 8–9; *An Arrow*, p. 6; *Certaine Articles*, pp. 191–93; and *An Agreement*, p. 407.

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war without the explicit consent of the people; the state church and any restrictions on religious freedom; and censorship and other violations of freedom of expression.[113] Similarly, in the area of "economic liberties," Overton was equally against confiscation and expropriation of private property, as well as tithes and high taxes, tariffs, privileges in commerce, and other forms of protectionism and mercantilism.[114]

Redistribution and the Tasks of Political Authority

For Overton, these specific rights are in reality nothing but the restrictions on political authority necessary to protect the natural right of individuals to the exercise of self-ownership. An important question, therefore, is what "positive" tasks of government would be compatable with such a radical individualism? The answer seems to be few, if any at all, for, as has been recognized, this is a doctrine with far-reaching socio-economic and political implications.[115] But despite his radicalism, Overton was no anarchist in any sense of the term. Rather, he should be seen as a proponent of what today would be called "classical liberalism," and, as such, an advocate of something similar to a "minimal state." Overton, in collaboration with his fellow Leveller leaders, identified three—and only three—main "positive" tasks of a government for which there is no need for further consent:

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[113]See *A Remonstrance*, pp. 121–23 and 125; *An Alarum*, p. 7; *Certaine Articles*, p. 192; and *An Agreement*, pp. 405 and 408.

[114]See *An Arrow*, p. 6; *A Remonstrance*, p. 126; *An Alarum*, p. 8; *Certaine Articles*, pp. 193–94; and *An Agreement*, pp. 407–8.

[115]Cf. this comment by a prominent socialist Leveller scholar: "Rash though it is in its militant individualism, this definition stands out from the records of the seventeenth century as one of the earliest and one of the boldest statements of the liberal creed. Strictly interpreted, it would deny the right of society to exact from the individual citizen his contribution to the welfare and even to the safety of the whole organism." See Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution,* p. 75. For contemporary radical liberal political theories based on a concept of self-ownership similar to that of Overton, see Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*; and, especially, Rothbard, *The Ethics of Liberty.*

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> 1 To the conservation of Peace and commerce with forrain Nations. 2 To the preservation of those safe guards, and securities of our lives, limbes, liberties, and estates . . . . 3 To the raising of moneys, and generally to all things as shall be evidently conducing to those ends, or to the enlargement of our freedom, redress of grievances, and prosperity of the Commonwealth.[116]

The positive tasks of government are to secure the natural right to life, liberty, and property, domestically as well as toward (but not in) the rest of the world, and, to some extent, to supply what economists today would label "public goods." However, it should be noted that the latter probably would be limited, for it was expressly stated that these "things" should be those which "evidently" are conducive to the protection of life, liberty, and property, and Overton's restrictive and negative interpretation of these values has already been shown. In other words, there seems to be little basis for judging Overton as being favorable to any form of government redistribution, and, thus, little basis for considering him an early forerunner of any form of socialism, such as some theorists have considered the Levellers.[117] In fact, Overton and his brothers-in-arms clearly felt uncomfortable with the label "Levellers," especially with the natural connotation of economic "leveling," which it almost logically seems to imply.[118] Indeed, this was

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[116]*An Agreement*, p. 405.

[117]As a group, the Levellers have been labeled "social democrats" (Joseph Frank, *The Levellers: A History of the Writings of Three Seventeenth-Century Social Democrats: John Lilburne, Richard Overton, William Walwyn* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955]), "socialists" (Fenner Brockway, *Britain's First Socialists: The Levellers, Agitators, and Diggers of the English Revolution* [London: Quartet Books, 1980]), and even been put in the same group as the "Diggers," i.e., as a group of proto-communists (Gernot Lennert, *Die Diggers: Eine Frühkommunistische Bewegung in der Englischen Revolution* [Gratenau-Dottingen: Trotzdem Verlag, 1986]). Cf. also Sharp, *The English Levellers*, pp. xii–xiii, who notes such additional adjectives as "radical democrats," "liberal democrats," "constitutional democrats," and "petty bourgeois democrats."

[118]The term "Levellers" was not coined until late 1647, when Ireton and Cromwell used it during the Putney Debates to invoke association with other radical and more egalitarian political groups. The in-this-way-dero-

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what it was intended to invoke when it was applied to the movement not by its supporters but by their opponents. This is evident from the fact that Overton often—at least four times—called the label "unjust," and did so prominently as not to be mistaken or ignored.[119] Together, the Leveller leaders stated explicitly that they were opposed to

> Levelling, for which we suppose is commonly meant an equalling of mens estates, and taking away the proper

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gative label actually had its historical origin in a quite different group of common men who, in 1607, protested against enclosures of previously common land by a literal "leveling" of fences. See Frank, *The Levellers,* pp. 2 and 291–92.

The label was also used to associate the group with Gerrard Winstanley's pantheistic, communitarian, and utopian "Digger" movement. This activist movement, which had a brief existence (1649–52), and from which the Levellers repeatedly distanced themselves, wanted to abolish private property in land and other economic inequalities by communalizing property and organizing a money-free economy; the Levellers were in this sense not "true Levellers."

This was indeed the label the Diggers themselves chose, presumably in order to differentiate themselves from the Leveller movement of Overton, Lilburne, and Walwyn, and which the Leveller scholar H.N. Brailsford, himself a dedicated socialist, reserved for them. See his chapter, "The True Levellers." in Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution,* pp. 656–70. On the differences between the "Levellers" and the "Diggers," see Pease, *The Leveller Movement*, pp. 314ff., Aylmer, *The Levellers in the English Revolution,* pp. 47–54; Jack R. McMichael and Barbara Taft, "The Life and Thought of William Walwyn," Introduction to *The Writings of William Walwyn*, ed. Jack R. McMichael and Barbara Taft (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), pp. 42–43.

[119]See [Richard Overton, John Lilburne, and Thomas Prince?], *[The] Second Part of Englands New-Chaines [Discovered: Or a sad Representation of the uncertain and dangerous condition of the Common-wealth. . . .]*, March 24, 1649, reprinted in Haller and Davies, *The Leveller Tracts,* pp. 172–89, esp. p. 181, where the label is dismissed as "slander." Cf., the subtitles of three other 1649 pamphlets, *A Manifestation*; *Overton's Defyance [of the Act of Pardon: Or, The Copy of a Letter to the Citizens usually meeting at the Whalebone in Lothbury behinde the Royal Exchange; And others commonly (though unjustly) styled Levellers]*, July 2, 1649; and *The Baiting [of the Great Bull of Bashan Unfolded. . . .]*, July 9, 1649.

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> right and Title that every man has to what is his own. . . . We profess therefore that we never had it in our thoughts to Level mens estates, it being the utmost of our aime that the Common-wealth be reduced to such a passe that every man may with as much security as may be enjoy his propriety.[120]

Thus, there can be little doubt that Overton was radically opposed to government redistribution, and that this was also the general sentiment of most of the Levellers, with the possible exception of Walwyn.[121] There is nothing in Overton's writings on natural rights anything even remotely resembling a principled advocacy of positive "welfare rights." For instance, when Overton stated in *An Arrow* and in *An Appeale* that all men are born to like "propriety," he was not talking about "goods" or "estates," of positive rights to specific amounts of property, but of the right to exercise self-ownership, that is, the right to acquire, possess, exchange, and consume material property.

Nonetheless, some prominent scholars have seen in Overton's writings, especially *Certaine Articles*, a deviation from the otherwise general *laissez-faire*-oriented character of the Leveller program, and possibly even the beginning of a more comprehensive social-welfare program.[122] However, this is at least partly an over-

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[120]*A Manifestation*, p. 279.

[121]Walwyn seems to have been the only Leveller leader who supported any form of positive rights to equal property, and that even only moderately so. Walwyn, of whom an explicit care for the relief of the poor and other forms of redistribution was more characteristic than of Overton, seems to have been in favor of some utopian ideal of voluntary "communism." But even this was only to be reached through a voluntary and unanimous agreement of the people. On Walwyn's egalitarian tendencies, see Wolfe, *Leveller Manifestoes of the Puritan Revolution,* p. 111; Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution*, p. 462; Watner, "Come What, Come Will!" pp. 409–10; and McMichael and Taft, *The Writings of William Walwyn,* p. 42. Lilburne, on the other hand, was as consistent a proponent of capitalism and the sanctity of private property rights as was Overton. See Watner, "Come What, Come Will!"; and David Hoile, *The Levellers: Libertarian Radicalism and the English Civil War* (London: Libertarian Alliance, 1992).

[122]See Aylmer, *The Levellers in the English Revolution*, pp. 48–49 and

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interpretation. It is true that Overton, at the end of *Certaine Articles*, added four paragraphs, three of which may be seen as endorsing something similar to a redistributive program: one addressed public schools, one dealt with public hospitals, and one discussed communal property. Yet, under closer scrutiny, not all are contrary to the *laissez-faire* program, and some even follow directly from Overton's self-ownership approach. First, Overton simply called for a return of private property which traditionally had belonged to private schools and private hospitals, and for

> all grouns which anciently lay in Common for the poore, and are now impropriate, inclosed, and fenced in, may forthwith (in whose hands soever they are) be cast out, and laid open againe to the free and common use and benefit of the poore.[123]

Second, while it is also true that Overton simultaneously made a call for local public funding of schools and hospitals, there may be several good reasons to consider this a pragmatic, perhaps almost opportunistic, policy adopted primarily out of compromise and to gain support for the larger causes.

But while this is merely a hypothesis, three points should be noted which together make it justifiable to see such demands simply as solitary exceptions from the general doctrine. First, they contradict his fundamental view of the purpose and limits of political authority. Second, their appearance in *Certaine Articles* seems a last-moment addition, placed at the end, and being "positive" in their demands of rights, rather than "negative," as are the rest. But third, and most important, this is the only time such demands appear explicitly in Overton's writings; no such suggestions appear in the joint, yet much more "Overtonian," *An Agreement*, which the Leveller leaders themselves considered "the ultimate end and full scope of all our desires and intentions concerning the Government of this Nation."[124]

82; and Wolfe, *Leveller Manifestoes of the Puritan Revolution,* p. 155.

[123] *Certaine Articles*, p. 194.

[124] *An Agreement*, p. 401.

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This article has presented an attempt to outline a synthesized, yet more coherently organized, version of Overton's political theory. Specifically, new and detailed attention has been given to Overton's foundational argument, and to how this provided the basis for his specific policy prescriptions.

It should now be obvious that there is nothing in Overton's doctrine that justifies placing him ideologically alongside the Diggers as a seventeenth-century English forerunner of socialist thought. Redistributive concerns played a role in Overton's thinking only to the extent that they were related to what he saw as violations by privileged classes of the common man's natural rights to life, liberty, and property. Rather, Overton was a staunch proponent of central elements of the classical liberal ideology, and to the extent that he is seen as the forerunner of any doctrine, it would most naturally be what may be called "Lockean liberalism." Indeed, all the main elements of what has come to be considered Locke's liberalism were present in Overton: the natural right of individuals to life, liberty, and property; the necessity of governments to be based on the consent of the governed; and the right of the governed to rebel when the government becomes oppressive. Overton's conceptualizations of the "state-of-nature" and the "social contract" may have been superficial and fragmented, but both the framework and the implications were there.

The only link that Overton needed in order to have been the true originator of classical liberalism was a bridge between, on the one hand, the claim that individuals have a natural right of self-ownership and property, and, on the other hand, a fully developed theory of how property rights are established. Overton completely lacked an articulated theory of justice in acquisition and legitimate ownership of land, although he came so close in introducing the notion of self-ownership as to almost stumble over that solution, which still had 30 to 35 years to wait before it would be formulated and put in print by John Locke.

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THE SCHISM BETWEEN INDIVIDUALIST AND COMMUNIST ANARCHISM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Wendy McElroy*

The image of a bomb-throwing anarchist is a cultural caricature but, as with many caricatures, there is some truth behind it. Certain forms of anarchism—specifically, the strain of nineteenth-century communist anarchism that arose in Russia and Germany—did embrace violence as a political strategy. Other forms of anarchism, however—such as Leo Tolstoi's Christian anarchism and the indigenously American strain of individualist anarchism—consistently repudiated the use of violence for political ends.[1] Indeed, one of the charges brought against early individualist anarchism was that its ideology was too peaceful, and its communities would be defenseless against aggressors.

In the late 1800s, however, there was a drastic change in this pacific image of anarchism. In the decades preceding the Russian Revolution, several communist anarchist groups repeatedly committed acts of brutal and almost random violence as a strategy to

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[1]For more on this native American tradition, see James J. Martin, *Men Against the State: The Expositors of Individualist Anarchism in America, 1827–1908* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Ralph Myles, 1970); Eunice Minette Schuster, *Native American Anarchism: A Study of Left-Wing American Individualism* (New York: AMS Press, 1970); and Wm. Gary Kline, *The Individualist Anarchists: A Critique of Liberalism* (New York: University Press of America, 1987).

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topple capitalism. These acts, called "propaganda by deed," were directed against people who belonged to the capitalist class, and included throwing bombs into crowded restaurants on the assumption that only capitalists could afford to eat there.

Violence erupted in America as well. On May 4, 1886, labor protesters and the police clashed in the streets of Chicago during a meeting organized by communist anarchists. The event, known to history as the Haymarket affair or incident, left dead bodies on both sides. Although the eight radicals arrested and tried were demonstrably innocent, the Haymarket affair cemented the connection between anarchism and violence in the mind of the American public. Anarchists became enemies of society and of civilization. Imposing the full force of law, including the death penalty, was viewed as a defensive act. During the Haymarket proceedings, the prosecutor declared:

> Law is on trial. Anarchy is on trial. These men have been selected . . . because they are leaders. They are no guiltier than the thousands who follow them. . . . [C]onvict these men . . . save our institutions, our society.[2]

The radical community reacted with outrage. Yet, throughout the arrest and the trial of the Chicago martyrs, and even upon the execution of four defendants and the suicide of one, the individualist anarchist Benjamin R. Tucker was reserved in his support of the accused.[3] Tucker's stand on this matter carried great significance, as his periodical *Liberty* (1881–1908) was the voice of individualist anarchism in the 19th century, and he was widely viewed as a final authority. With this weight of influence, Tucker declared:

> It is because peaceful agitation and passive resistance are weapons more deadly to tyranny than any others that I uphold them. . . . [B]rute force strengthens tyranny. . . . War and authority are companions; peace and liberty are companions. . . . The Chicago Communists I

[2]Quoted in Philip Foner, *The Haymarket Autobiographies* (New York: Humanities Press, 1969), p. 8.

[3]Benjamin Tucker was the most prominent and influential individualist anarchist of the late nineteenth century. Indeed, individualist anarchism became known as "Boston Anarchism" because Tucker lived in Boston. Tucker's articles on issues took on the air of position papers.

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> look upon as brave and earnest men and women. That does not prevent them from being equally mistaken.[4]

The Haymarket incident was the proximate cause of a deep schism that occurred in America between the individualist anarchists and the communist anarchists with whom they had formerly aligned, but it was actually the last of a series of events. The schism was rooted in ideology, specifically in the question of whether force could be employed as a political strategy.

LIBERTY AND VIOLENCE AS A STRATEGY

To judge from the first page of the first issue of *Liberty* published August 6, 1881, Benjamin Tucker celebrated both violence as a strategy and the people who employed it for political ends. At the head of the center column, and dominating the text, was a handsome engraving of Russian nihilist Sophie Perovskaya—"Liberty's Martyred Heroine"—who was proclaimed to have been "Hanged April 15, 1881, For Helping to Rid the World of a Tyrant [Czar Alexander II]." Tucker declared the engraving to be "the first authentic likeness published in America of the most famous and heroic of the little Russian band."[5] A memorial poem by Joaquin Miller followed.

Three issues later, Tucker continued to praise the Russian nihilists for their violent resistance to tyranny, "which the Nihilists alone are prepared to tear out by the roots and bury out of sight forever. Success to the Nihilists!"[6] Nevertheless, on the same page, an article by Tucker entitled "Liberty's Weapons" began, "Our methods are the methods of peace. *Liberty* is not the advocate of force."[7]

Realizing that such a jarring juxtaposition of articles might confuse his readers, or lead them to accuse him of inconsistency, Tucker voiced what he imagined to be their reaction:

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[4]Appended to "The Philosophical Anarchists," *Liberty* (July 31, 1886): 1.

[5]*Liberty* (August 6, 1881): 1. The likeness of the nihilistic assassin had been reproduced from one privately forwarded to him after the London revolutionary congress had distributed a handful in England.

[6]"The Doctrine of Assent," *Liberty* (September 17, 1881): 2.

[7]"Liberty's Weapons," *Liberty* (September 17, 1881): 2.

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> And yet *Liberty* finds words of approval for the . . . tyrant-slayers who in secrecy plot the revenges of fate. Why? Because *Liberty* is forced to choose between one class that slays to oppress and another that slays to free.

To those who still expressed confusion, he urged patience in their "great hurry for a full and systematic explanation of *Liberty*'s philosophy and purposes. . . . Patience, good friends, patience!"[8]

Almost thirty issues later and still without the promised "systematic explanation," Tucker commented upon the assassination of French politician Leon Gambetta with the words,

> It is a fitting ending to the life of one of the most dangerous characters of Europe, over whose disappearance *Liberty*, not in a spirit of triumphant revenge, but simply voicing a sincere desire for the public welfare, can only rejoice.[9]

Yet, whenever acts of violence against politicians occurred within the United States, *Liberty* reacted in a markedly different manner than it did toward similar attacks in Europe. For example, when President Garfield was assassinated by Charles Guiteau in 1881, Tucker declared,

> As to the act committed by Guiteau all sensible men agree. Nothing but its insanity saved it from being dastardly, bloodthirsty, and thoroughly devilish, without reason, proper motive, or excuse.[10]

Yet, Tucker's criticism of the American assassin Guiteau occurred only two issues after his idolization of Russian assassin Sophie Perovskaya. Some two dozen issues later, Tucker expressed

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[8]"Liberty's Weapons," pp. 2–3.

[9]"Another Tyrant Fallen," *Liberty* (January 20, 1883): 2. In its eleventh year, *Liberty* was more reserved about rejoicing at the violent death of another French politician, President Carnot. In an article entitled "Violence Breeds Violence," Victor Yarros wrote, "What wonder is there that the revolutionists have taken Carnot's life? The revolutionists are not treated with mercy, why should they be merciful?" Yet, Yarros followed up this sympathetic statement with the balancing observation, "The act is to be regretted; it may have serious consequences." *Liberty* (June 30, 1894): 2.

[10]"Pity, but not Praise," *Liberty* (September 3, 1881): 3.

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joy at the death of French politician Gambetta, thus eliminating the possibility that, in the brief interval between praising Perovskaya and repudiating Guiteau, he had changed his attitude toward violence as a political strategy.

The explanation of this apparent inconsistency lay in Tucker's view of violence as a last-resort strategy that could be justified only when freedom of speech and freedom of the press had been destroyed, as they had been in Perovskaya's Russia. As long as radicals in America could speak out and publish, however, they could educate the public toward "the Anarchistic idea" and thereby inspire rebellion.

Although Tucker was acutely aware of the restrictions on freedom of speech and freedom of the press within the United States, he insisted that newspapers, "if not allowed to say everything they would like to, are able to say all that is absolutely necessary to say in order to finally achieve their end, the triumph of liberty."[11] Then, and only then, with the solid foundation of an educated citizenry, could an anarchist society succeed. Until that foundation had been laid, Tucker counseled radicals in America to eschew violence against the State and to practice more peaceful means of agitation.[12]

Liberty's rejection of tactical violence in the United States was part of a systematic view of strategy.[13] The reasons for this rejection were well expressed in an article written by Florence Finch Kelly (under the initials F.F.K.) entitled "Violence Breeds Violence." Kelly flatly stated that no "permanent good" was to be achieved through the use of violence. She asked all radicals to "stop

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[11]"Herr Most on Libertas," *Liberty* (April 14, 1999): 4.

[12]For more on this theme, see Morgan Edwards, "Neither Bombs nor Ballots: *Liberty* and the Strategy of Anarchism," in *Benjamin R. Tucker & the Champions of Liberty*, ed. Michael E. Coughlin, Charles H. Hamilton, and Mark A. Sullivan (St. Paul and New York: Michael E. Coughlin and Mark Sullivan, 1981).

[13]The American tradition of individualist anarchism had deep roots in non-resistance, dating back to the abolitionism movement of William Lloyd Garrison (1830s), which was largely composed of Quakers. See Lewis Perry, *Radical Abolitionism: Anarchy and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1973).

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and study well" the effect of State brutality upon their own hearts. She argued that violence had not convinced them to accept the State or to embrace it as legitimate. Rather, violence had only hardened their beliefs and angered them to respond in kind. So, too, she said, would a strategy of violence impact the American people: the bomb-throwing revolutionary could only "terrify them, and in their terror they can only strike back and hug their beliefs all the closer." The use of violence would result in

> nothing but a brute battle for physical supremacy with a rabid determination on each side to exterminate the other. And it happens that the probabilities of extermination are all on the wrong side.[14]

By insisting upon peaceful agitation within the United States, the individualist anarchists placed themselves at odds with the communist anarchists, many of whom, as immigrants, had imported political strategies of violence from Russia and Germany. For example, communist anarchist leader Johann Most left Germany in 1882 for New York, where he began publication of the German-language paper *Die Freiheit*, in which he openly called for workers to commit acts of violence against the State.[15] *Liberty* offered a sense of the urgency with which Most called for insurrection through a translated excerpt from *Die Freiheit*. Most cried out, "The existing system will be quickest and most radically overthrown by the annihilation of its exponents. Therefore, massacres of the enemies of the people must be set in motion."[16] Because of his preferred method of explosive resistance, the editor of *Die Freiheit* was nicknamed Dynamost.

With such profound theoretical differences between the traditions of individualist and communist anarchism, it was inevitable that a bitter schism would eventually separate them. Nevertheless, Tucker's strong links to European anarchist periodicals and personalities, as well as his championing of Proudhonian economics,

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[14]"Violence Breeds Violence," *Liberty* (December 3, 1887): 4.

[15]The two other most significant voices for such violence were *The Alarm*, published in Chicago by A.R. Parsons, and *Truth*, published in San Francisco by Burnette J. Haskell.

[16]As quoted by Appleton in "Individualist Visionaries," *Liberty* (June 20, 1885): 4.

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had forged a bond that resisted severing. For instance, on July 16, 1881, when the moribund International Working People's Association revived in London, Tucker had been ecstatic. In an article entitled "Vive l'Association Internationale," Tucker enthused, "To this momentous event, which marks an epoch in the progress of the great labor movement . . . *Liberty*, in the present issue, devotes a large portion of her space."[17]

As historian Margaret S. Marsh observed in her book *Anarchist Women*, there had initially been good will and co-operation between the individualist and communist anarchists.

> Their conflict . . . came after a brief period of harmony. Tucker and the Individualists had wanted initially to cooperate with the European anarchist movement. In 1881, the editor of *Liberty* hailed the creation of the anarchist "Black International," proposing that his paper serve as its English-language organ.[18]

For a while, *Liberty* served this function. The November 12, 1881, issue carried a report by J.H. Swain, who, as a representative of individualist anarchism, had attended a follow-up conference in Chicago where he was extremely well received, even though the majority of attendees were socialists. A year later, the two factions of anarchism became bitter enemies.

The schism was sped along not only by theoretical differences but also by three specific events: the second Congress of the International held in 1883, *Liberty*'s exposé of the "New York firebugs," and the Haymarket incident.

SECOND CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL

After welcoming Most to America, *Liberty* soon became the most vocal critic of the communist anarchist leader. Henry Appleton, writing under the pseudonym "X," led the assault on Most, whom he labeled a "State Socialist" rather than an "Anarchist." Appleton pressed Most to answer one question: under the social system that Most proposed, what would become of a peaceful in-

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[17]"Vive l'Association Internationale," *Liberty* (August 20, 1881): 2.

[18]Margaret S. Marsh, *Anarchist Women 1870–1920* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981), p. 12.

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dividual who did not agree to live by his economic theories? Appleton demanded to know "whether Communistic Anarchists propose to let me severely alone, provided I decline to take any part in their schemes, but choose to paddle my own canoe, at my own cost."

It seemed clear to Appleton that if he withdrew from Most's society and happened "to be personally occupying, cultivating, and using forty acres of land, upon which I have built a home, a barn, and bought tools, domestic animals" that it would be only a matter of time before he was "torn from my bed and cleaned out to make room for one of Herr Most's elect." All he had built and cultivated would be "declared the property of the Commune." For this reason, Appleton concluded, "these Communists are not Anarchists, but, when crowded back upon their basic resources, are at war with *Liberty*, whose very incarnation true Anarchy is."[19]

In 1883, Chicago anarchists—the vast majority of whom were communists—organized a conference to be held in Pittsburgh. Its purpose was to establish a platform on which radical agitators of all ideologies, from Marxism to Individualism, could agree. Dominated by Most, the planned conference managed to alienate both the Marxists who refused to attend and the individualists who broke off all official cooperation with the conference.

On October 6, 1883, on the first page of *Liberty*, Tucker denounced the scheme to promote a latitudinarian platform for radicals which was to be introduced at the October 14th conference. The scheme itself was embodied in a document prepared by communist anarchist Burnette J. Haskell, editor of the San Francisco *Truth*. Tucker flatly declared the document a failure. Moreover, he considered it "specious and implausible," calling it "perhaps the most foolishly inconsistent piece of work that ever came to our notice."[20]

In the same issue, Tucker published an open letter to Haskell, upbraiding *Truth* for inconsistency, and for losing the passion of its first issues. On a more personal and, perhaps, more important note, Tucker professed surprise upon reading Haskell's intention to

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[19]"Individualist Visionaries," *Liberty* (June 20, 1885): 4.

[20]*Liberty* (October 6, 1883): 1.

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serialize an English translation of Bakounine's book *God and the State* in the pages of *Truth*. Tucker was furious because he had been the first to "introduce Bakounine to America in any marked way." He had already announced his own intention to translate and publish an English edition of the work.

In a proprietary tone, Tucker asserted, "I was deeply adverse to having this author first introduced in English handicapped by misleading associates."[21] In short, Tucker did not want the first English translation of *God and the State* to issue from Haskell. Instead, he "hurried to completion" his own translation, "placed it in the hands" of printers, and dispatched an advertisement of the work to *Truth*. The ad was rejected, purportedly because it included the words, "monstrous schemes of Karl Marx and Lassalle." Haskell explained that he was attempting to reconcile all forms of Socialism, and to form "common ground for unity between Socialists and Anarchists." The wording of Tucker's advertisement ran counter to this goal.[22]

Tucker responded with characteristic bluntness:

> In addition to the eyes of Beelzebub, have you acquired the smooth tongue of Mephistopheles? . . . How gauzy your excuse! Frankly, now, was not the real reason for the rejection of my advertisement a desire to prevent your readers from knowing that I was before you in the publication of *God and the State*.[23]

As for Haskell's attempt to unify socialism and anarchism, Tucker expressed the deepest of skepticism.

Predictably, Haskell answered within the pages of his own paper, thus prompting Tucker to pen yet another open letter to him in *Liberty*. Although the second letter added no substance to the first, the relationship between the two editors clearly had deteriorated

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[21]In *Men Against the State*, p. 223, James J. Martin points out that "Tucker had berated Haskell's policy of printing long excerpts from the works of Marx, Proudhon, Bakunin, and other socialists and anarchists without any attempt at discrimination of interpretation, in the hope of creating the impression of the essential sameness." This is probably what Tucker meant by the words "misleading associates."

[22]"Has *Truth* Become a Liar?" *Liberty* (October 6, 1883): 2.

[23]"Has *Truth* Become a Liar?" p. 3.

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into bitterness and *ad hominem* attacks. When Haskell wrote privately to Tucker years later asking him for a favor, Tucker published a letter within *Liberty* in which he publicly declined to accommodate Haskell. He prefaced the public rejection with the observation that "[Haskell] once called frantically and in vain for a Brutus to plunge his dagger into the Anarchist Caesar who sits on the editorial throne of *Liberty*."[24]

Where Tucker had once expressed good will toward both Most and Haskell, the opposite sentiment now existed in perpetuity.

THE NEW YORK FIRE BUGS

In the March 27, 1886, issue of *Liberty*, in an article entitled "The Beast of Communism," Tucker took the remarkable step of publicly airing a movement scandal. He named names, and one of them was John Most.[25] Tucker began by condemning Most and the "New York Germans" for converting the word "anarchist," at least in the public mind, into a term synonymous with criminal activity, violence, and destruction. He wrote, "the word has been usurped, in the face of all logic and consistency, by a party of Communists who believe in a tyranny worse than any that now exists."[26] Tucker labeled this hard core of communism "a gang of criminals whose deeds for the past two years rival in 'pure cussedness' any to be found in the history of crime."[27]

Liberty usually reserved such strong language for politicians and other agents of the State. Tucker proceeded to explain why he now directed this language toward fellow radicals. He declared that "a large number of the most active members of the German Group of the International Working People's Association in New York City, and of the Social Revolutionary Club" were setting fire to their own property in order to collect on insurance policies, even though those properties were sometimes tenements with hundreds

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[24]*Liberty* (March 27, 1886): 5.

[25]Tucker consistently anglicized the German "Johann."

[26]*Liberty* (March 27, 1886): 1.

[27]*Liberty* (March 27, 1886): 1. For an in-depth discussion of "propaganda by deed," see James Joll, "Terrorism and Propaganda by Deed," chap. 5 in *The Anarchists* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964).

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of occupants.[28] In one such fire, a mother and a newborn baby had burned to death. In another, a mother and two children lost their lives. Tucker listed fire after fire, death after death.

Moreover, Tucker expanded his accusations to include "well-meaning editors of leading journals of so-called Communistic Anarchism." These editors knew of the death of innocents, but held their silence out of "mistaken party fealty." Tucker pointed his finger specifically at Most, whom he said was shielding the criminals from detection. "[A]fter he was made aware of these acts," Tucker continued, "he not only refused to repudiate them, but persisted in retaining as his right-hand men some of the worst of the gang."[29]

After consulting with some of the most prominent anarchists in the country, Tucker felt compelled to expose the murderous crimes that were being committed in the name of class justice. One event spurred him on. While he had been debating the matter, a mother and her baby perished in another fire. Tucker bitterly reproached himself: had he published his exposé earlier, the fire would not have been set, and the mother and child would still be alive. Berating himself, Tucker made an overt show of remorse in the pages of *Liberty*.

Then, in a move considered treasonous by many fellow radicals, he called upon

> every honorable newspaper in America to lay these facts before its readers, placing the blame where it belongs and distinguishing the innocent from the guilty. And especially do I address the Anarchist press. Every Anarchistic journal ought to copy this exposure and send it forth with the stamp of its approval.[30]

Many papers acceded to his request: respectable mainstream ones did so with glee.

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[28]Interestingly, the International Working People's Association had been created in 1883 at the Second Congress, of which Tucker was so critical.

[29]*Liberty* (March 27, 1886): 1. Most seemed particularly enamored with the idea of revolutionary violence, and had written a pamphlet entitled *Revolutionare Kriegswissenschaft* (The Science of Revolutionary Warfare), which outlined how to build and use bombs, as well as how to employ arson to further "the cause." *Die Freiheit* ran articles on the virtues of dynamite and the ways to produce nitroglycerine.

[30]"The Beast of Communism," *Liberty* (March 27, 1886): 8.

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A furor broke out in radical circles, exacerbated by the fact that many "honorable" papers grabbed onto the scandal as a means of discrediting anarchism. The radical *Der Arme Teufel*—a German weekly published in Detroit by Robert Reitzel—lamented "these charges are published by the capitalistic press with great gusto and satisfaction."[31] Forced by publicity to respond, Most denied any knowledge of the insurance fires, and denounced Tucker's motives in exposing the alleged crimes.

Tucker refused to back down. In an article entitled "Time Will Tell," he reiterated the charges and declared,

> I have done what I could to save the lives and possessions of unoffending people and to save Anarchy from being smirched by association, even in name, with crime and criminals.[32]

He printed two letters which tended to support his original charges: one from Reitzel, the other from Justus H. Schwab, a prominent member of the International Working People's Association whom Tucker had mentioned favorably for having registered a protest against the fires.

Meanwhile, in *Die Freiheit*, Most promised to clear up the matter in future issues. Unfortunately for him, subsequent investigations substantiated most of the charges that Tucker had leveled against the communist anarchists.[33]

The turbulence caused by Tucker's exposé had barely subsided before the most significant event to rock nineteenth-century anar-

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[31]*Liberty* (April 17, 1886): 1. The next several issues of *Liberty* reprinted articles on this subject and Anarchism in general, as well as responses to the general press from Tucker. When Tucker did not champion the Haymarket defendants, Yarros wrote, "Clergymen, capitalistic editors and labor reformers begin to smile on 'philosophical anarchism' pronounce it a very sweet and charming thing." Yarros suggested that *Liberty* needed to be saved from such friends. *Liberty* (July 31, 1886): 1.

[32]"Time Will Tell," *Liberty* (April 17, 1886): 4.

[33]*Liberty* (May 22, 1886): 8. Tucker reprinted an article from the New York *Sun* that reflected weeks of research by an independent journalist and which—in Tucker's works—should "convince every fair-minded person that I told the truth." Most was reduced to claiming that he did not know the people mentioned in the article, although many of them had been identified repeatedly as "comrades" in earlier issues of *Die Freiheit*.

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chism occurred: the Haymarket incident. Again, Tucker found himself at odds with the communist anarchists.

THE HAYMARKET INCIDENT

The city of Chicago seemed to be a magnet for immigrant radicals, most of whom were communist or socialist, and many of whom were deeply committed to the labor movement. The most popular labor organization, the International Working People's Association, published five papers out of Chicago alone, three of them in German. Indeed, Chicago sent more delegates than any other city to the Second Congress that Tucker had denounced earlier.[34] The large and vocal population of radicals seemed to inspire extreme brutality within the Chicago police force, which made a point of violently breaking up even the most peaceful of labor assemblies.

Perhaps in response to police brutality, the Chicago anarchists openly embraced violence as a political strategy. August Spies, the editor of *Die Arbeiter Zeitung*—and one of the Haymarket defendants who was executed—penned a resolution that was passed by the Central Labor Union in that city. It read, in part,

> We urgently call upon the wage-class to arm itself in order to be able to put forth against their exploiters such an argument which alone can be effective—Violence![35]

The native American Albert Parsons, editor of the *Alarm*, was no less passionate in his call for armed resistance. He wrote,

> The Communist and anarchist urges the people to study their schoolbooks on chemistry and read the dictionaries on the composition and construction of all kinds of explosives and make themselves too strong to be opposed with deadly weapons.[36]

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[34]George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (New York: World Publishing, 1962), p. 462, estimates, "The actual number of anarchists in the Chicago groups was probably about 3,000 out of the International's total American membership of 6,000."

[35]As quoted in Woodcock, *Anarchism*, p. 462, emphasis in original.

[36]As quoted in William Reichert, *Partisans of Freedom: A Study in American Anarchism* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1976), p. 222.

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With the emergence of the Eight-Hour Movement in the spring of 1886, 65,000 Chicago workers either went on strike or were locked out by their employers. As May Day drew near, violent encounters between laborers and police increased. On May 3rd, police fired upon a crowd of laborers, killing several people. The next day, when a protest held in the Haymarket Square began to break up peacefully because of rain, police interrupted a speech by Samuel Fielden, a leader of the demonstration. From the sidelines, someone threw a bomb toward police, who opened fire. The shots were returned.[37] In the final count, seven policemen died; the death toll of the crowd has never been established, but it has been estimated to be in excess of twenty people.

Hysteria gripped Chicago. Businesses closed their doors. Respectable society demanded blood for blood. Anarchists were rounded up with no concern for whether they actually had been involved in the incident. Thirty-one people were indicted for murder, sixty-nine for lesser crimes.

Eventually, eight men were tried for murder in a court case that was a travesty of justice and just procedures. For example, the jury was not chosen in the normal manner: a bailiff was instructed to go out into the street and select whomever he wished to serve.[38]

The Haymarket incident and the backlash it inspired in the American public was the beginning of an ongoing hatred of and prejudice against anarchism. The impact of the incident on radicalism can hardly be overstated, and may be best understood by considering two personal examples.

The individualist anarchist and feminist Voltairine de Cleyre, upon reading a newspaper headline announcing that anarchists had

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[37]The identity of the bomb-thrower remains a mystery. Some claim that the responsible party was a police provocateur—namely, the so-called "anarchist" agitator Schnaubelt, who was sought by police but never found. One thing is evident, however: the eight men tried and convicted of the crime were innocent of the act, though perhaps guilty of contributing to it through their incendiary literature and words.

[38]The best sources on the Haymarket incident and subsequent trial are Henry David's *History of the Haymarket Affair* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1936); and Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984).

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thrown a bomb into a crowd, had exclaimed, "They ought to be hanged!" She regretted the words instantly. Her regret became more bitter as she learned, shortly thereafter, the true circumstances surrounding the Haymarket affair. Fourteen years later, de Cleyre was still haunted by her imprudent words: "For that ignorant, outrageous, blood-thirsty sentence I shall never forgive myself."[39] Much of de Cleyre's anarchistic activity in the ensuing years can be seen as an attempt to expiate her sin, and her most passionate addresses were those she delivered at the yearly memorials for the Haymarket martyrs.

The communist anarchist and feminist Emma Goldman described her reaction to the Haymarket incident in her autobiographical *Living My Life*. After becoming hysterical, Goldman fell into a deep sleep. Upon awakening, she discovered something new and wonderful within her soul. It was "a great ideal, a burning faith, a determination to dedicate myself to the memory of my martyred comrades, to make their cause my own."[40] Goldman abandoned her newlywed husband and proceeded to New York to prepare herself for the radicalism that would consume the rest of her life.

Against this backdrop of passionate and profound reaction, Tucker became the main voice for prudence within the radical community.[41] Indeed, some of his associates were annoyed by the

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[39]As reported in Paul Avrich, *An American Anarchist: The Life of Voltairine de Cleyre* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 49–50.

[40]Emma Goldman, *Living My Life* (New York: Dover, 1970), vol. 1, p. 10.

[41]Tucker believed that Most and most of the other men arrested in the wake of the Haymarket incident were not anarchists, but State Socialists. Victor Yarros picked up this theme in his critique of Dyer D. Lum's article, "Chicago Anarchists." Lum had protested, "I am pained to see many have used the phrase 'so-called Anarchists' or 'Communists' when referring to them." Arguing persuasively that the men were State Socialists, Yarros labeled Lum's article as "absurdly false and dishonestly misleading." See "Neither Fish Nor Flesh," *Liberty* (January 14, 1886): 6.

Reichert, *Partisans of Freedom*, p. 16, explains that Parsons and many other Chicago anarchists adopted that label "more as a matter of convenience than ideological commitment," because the popular press hurled that term at them repeatedly.

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reserved tone of his initial response. Some of his subdued attitude may have been due to the timing of *Liberty*: the first issue in which Tucker could comment on the Haymarket affair appeared on May 22nd, almost two weeks after the event had occurred. By then, Tucker had undoubtedly read and reflected upon the calls-to-arms emanating from other sources. He believed that only the utter suppression of free speech could justify an armed revolution, and this condition did not yet exist, nor had it been present on May 4th in Haymarket Square.

Tucker clearly denounced the brutality of the Chicago police and of everyone else involved in savaging the arrested men: "The conduct during the last fortnight of the police, the courts, the pulpit, and the press, including many of the labor organs themselves, has been shameful in the extreme." But he also criticized communist anarchists in general, and the arrested men in particular, for having advocated the use of force to achieve political ends. In their meetings, for example, communist speakers often and consciously incited their listeners to violence. *Liberty* asked rhetorically,

> Have they not been preaching for years that the laborers need no other provocation than their steady oppression by capital to warrant them in wholesale destruction of life and property? Was not this very meeting [the Haymarket protest] held for the purpose of advising the laborers to pursue such a policy? . . . This event at Chicago opens the whole question of the advisability of armed revolution.[42]

Nevertheless, Tucker concluded with a backhanded defense of Most, who, even though he had been in New York during the bombing, had been arrested as well for his incendiary views. Tucker wrote,

> [A]mong the victims of these authority-ridden maniacs is John Most. Toward him as a social reformer *Liberty*'s

[42]"*Liberty* and Violence," *Liberty* (May 22, 1888): 4. James J. Martin, *Men Against the State*, p. 225, observed that "Tucker was, in fact, far more interested in the psychological problem which the actions of the Chicago revolutionaries and of Most presented the radical cause as a whole. . . . He was absolutely convinced that the desired social revolution would be possible only through the utility of peaceful propaganda and passive resistance, for to use violence was merely to mark time, historically. Hence, the lack of vigor in defending the Haymarket group."

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> attitude has been and will be hostile in the extreme, but toward him as a human being deprived of his fundamental rights it can be nothing but sympathetic.[43]

On the next page of *Liberty*, an article by Appleton entitled "The Boston Anarchists" spelled out the peaceful principles and policies of individualist anarchism, which stood in stark contrast to those of communist anarchism. Appleton followed up in the next issue with a piece entitled "Authority-blinded." While not forgiving Most for "the late assaults upon person and property," Appleton decried the vicious treatment of the arrested man at the hands of the police and in court.[44]

In the same issue and on the opposing page, communist anarchist Dyer D. Lum complained that

> the grave situation in which the Chicago "Communists" (if you will) are placed demands . . . more than dissertations or well-rounded and careful distinctions by "X" [Appleton] between "Boston Anarchists" and the "savage Communists of Chicago."[45]

Tucker—whom Lum also called to task—replied,

> I have denounced the treatment of the Chicago Communists in the strongest terms that I could think of. I could have done nothing more except subscribe for their defense and ask *Liberty*'s constituency to do likewise.[46]

Tucker then expanded on his belief that the use of force in resisting the state merely lent an air of justification to the state's subsequent repression. Recalling the example of Anthony Comstock's persecution of free speech radicals in the 1870s, Tucker argued that if Comstock's victims had responded by shooting their persecutor, public outrage would have strengthened the cause of censorship.

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[43]"*Liberty* and Violence," p. 4.

[44]"Authority-blinded," *Liberty* (June 19, 1886): 4.

[45]"Mr. Lum finds *Liberty* Wanting," *Liberty* (June 19, 1886): 5. Lum's attitude reflected a common response of radicals and anarchists outside of the Boston Anarchist community.

[46]"Mr. Lum Finds *Liberty* Wanting." On page 4 of the September 24, 1887, issue of *Liberty*, Tucker called for readers to "let ample funds flow in, in order that all that can be done may be done, regardless of cost."

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In one of his first major appearances in the pages of *Liberty*, Russian immigrant Victor Yarros stirred up controversy by doing something few other contributors dared: he took Tucker publicly to task. Yarros warned that the "Philosophical Anarchists" were in imminent danger of becoming both "respectable" and spoken well of by "a sort of people whose friendship would be the greatest misfortune and disgrace to any serious movement. These are friends that *Liberty* must be saved from." Yarros was referring to the general press—which lauded both Tucker's condemnation of the New York firebugs and his stated reservations regarding the Haymarket defendants. Yarros declared, "No wonder many of our best friends are disgusted."[47]

Speaking as a Philosophical Anarchist himself, Yarros stated clearly, "I do not wish to be mistaken as opposing the position *Liberty* has taken on the question of force." At the same time, he wished to vigorously protest against Tucker's representation of anarchism as "pacific" and non-violent. He expressed contempt for "Christian meekness and all-forgiving love in a radical." As a ringing conclusion, Yarros cried out, "Anarchism means war. . . . We have a right to use force and resist by all means the invasion of the self-constituted rulers."[48]

In an uncharacteristically muted manner, Tucker responded, "While giving hearty assent to what I take to be Mr. Yarros's gen-

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[47]Among those friends was Charles T. Fowler, who publicly complained in the pages of *Truth Seeker* that *Liberty* was not protesting the treatment of the Chicago defendants. In *Lucifer the Light Bearer*, Fowler published an article defending the martyrs. Meanwhile, other radical periodicals denounced the Tuckerites as "sham anarchists." Despite such criticisms, however, it is clear that the Haymarket defendants themselves were somewhat influenced by *Liberty*'s stand. Tucker reports that Parsons's speech before the court incorporated material from a *Liberty* article on the controversy. *Liberty* (October 30, 1886): 1.

[48]*Liberty* (July 31, 1886): 1. As on many issues, Yarros seemed to change considerably over the years. In an exchange with Auberon Herbert some eight years later, an older and more restrained Yarros wrote that force should be employed only when the choice is either "force" or "entire inactivity." At that point, "force may and should be used for the purposes of acquiring the liberty of using other and better weapons." *Liberty* (July 14, 1894): 4.

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eral meaning . . . I desire to be a little more explicit." He explained that the terms "'philosophical' and 'pacific' do not trouble me, no matter who applies them."

In response to Yarros's declaration of war against the state, Tucker observed that war measures "are almost always violations of rights." He then drew an important distinction between the New York communists who had caused the death of innocents in insurance fires and the Chicago communists who had been rash and reckless in resisting the state. "The New York firebugs are contemptible villains; the Chicago Communists I look upon as brave and earnest men and women. That does not prevent them from being equally mistaken."[49] Their mistake, however, was not one of principle, but of strategic vision.

In response to what Yarros termed a general "disgust" directed at Tucker from the radical community, the editor bluntly announced,

> Call me brute, call me coward, call me "kid-gloved Anarchist," call me what you will, I stand to my post. I have yet to learn that it is any man's duty to sustain his reputation for bravery at the cost of his loyalty to truth. . . . When I in turn shall find myself at close quarters with the wild beast [the state], I consent to have my courage judged. For that day I wait. And while I wait, I work.[50]

As the day of execution for the convicted men drew near, Tucker expressed deep sorrow, but did not change his stance. He wrote, "the day approaches on which the brutal State proposes to execute upon these rash but noble men a base and far more rash revenge." He concluded that the lesson to be learned from the impending tragedy was this: the state is a monster

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[49]*Liberty* (July 31, 1886): 1.

[50]"Why Expect Justice from the State?" *Liberty* (July 31, 1886): 4. Martin, *Men Against the State*, p. 226, commented that Tucker's actions belied his words. "Few radical periodicals devot[ed] as much space to the defense of the accused men as did *Liberty*. Copious references to the case continued to appear for over ten years thereafter, and he never discarded his conviction that the men were innocent. His only reproach was on the grounds of the incendiary language of their literature and journals, which was a direct invitation to the state to retaliate." As late as November 1896, Tucker reviewed the Haymarket case at length in the pages of *Liberty*.

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> that cannot be reformed; it must be killed. But how? Not by dynamite; that will not harm it. How, then? By light. It thrives in the darkness of its victims' ignorance; it and they must be flooded with the light of liberty. If the seven must die, such must be the lesson of their death.[51]

The executions took place on November 11. The first page of the November 19th issue of *Liberty* was entirely devoted to a poem in memory of and in tribute to the Haymarket martyrs. On page four, Tucker ran a memorial column. However, he also reprinted a lecture he had delivered before the Anarchists' Club a few days prior to the executions. There, again, Tucker expressed a dual response: he was outraged and sorrowful at the prospect of the state murdering innocent men, but he was determined to distinguish individualist anarchism from Chicago "anarchism."

By now, Tucker was sufficiently sensitive to the reaction of his peers to interrupt the speech with an explanatory side note:

> And inasmuch as my subject compels me to say something in criticism of these men's opinion, and inasmuch also as five days hence they are to die upon the gallows . . . you will excuse me, I am sure, if I interrupt my argument . . . long enough to qualify my criticism in advance by a word of tribute and a declaration of fellowship.[52]

After the brief tribute, a lengthy criticism ensued.

Tucker became so committed to distinguishing individualist anarchism from communist anarchism that he announced a new German-language periodical entitled *Libertas*, to be edited by his close friends George and Emma Schumm, in order to promote in-

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[51]"The Lesson of the Hour," *Liberty* (September 24, 1887): 4.

[52]"General Walker and the Anarchists," *Liberty* (November 19, 1887): 5. In the end, on November 11, 1887, only four of the men were executed: August Spies, Albert Parsons, Adolph Fischer, and George Engel. Louis Lingg had committed suicide in his cell the day before. Samuel Fielden, Oscar Neebe, and Michael Schwab were pardoned a few years later by Gov. Altgeld, who investigated the charges against them, and found no evidence of guilt. Tucker lavished praise on Altgeld for this act of political courage, and contrasted it with Henry George's act of political cowardice in refusing to protest the original Haymarket verdict.

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dividualist anarchism to those German-speaking state socialists and radicals who might be disillusioned in the wake of the executions.

THE WAKE OF THE HAYMARKET

Socialist historian Morris Hillquit has observed with some justice that "The Chicago incident was practically the closing chapter in the history of the anarchist movement in this country." Many radicals who had considered themselves communist anarchists shifted their energies and allegiances to the more moderate socialist cause. Labor organizations, such as the International Working-Men's Association, which had aligned with anarchists on certain issues, now eschewed anything and anyone anarchistic.[53] Events of the late-nineteenth century cemented rather than dissipated this prejudice.

For example, in July 1892, communist anarchist Alexander Berkman attempted unsuccessfully to assassinate Carnegie steel magnate Henry C. Frick. About this debacle, Tucker wrote,

> During the conflict now on between capital and labor, seldom a day passes without the shedding of blood. . . . I freely confess that I am more desirous of being saved from friends like Berkman, to whom my heart goes out, than from enemies like Frick, from whom my heart withdraws.

Within *Liberty,* subsequent discussion of the scandal revolved around Most's public assertion that the communistic Berkman was actually a devotee of Tucker's individualist anarchism, and Tucker's denial of the claim.[54]

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[53]Morris Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States* (New York: Funk & Wagnall's, 1903), p. 252. Hillquit chronicles the growth of socialism in the wake of the Haymarket incident, along with the speed with which organized labor withdrew its support from anything anarchistic.

[54]Berkman himself later abandoned "propaganda by deed" and declared, "It is the means that shape your ends. The means are the seeds which bud into flower and come to fruition. The fruit will always be of the nature of the seed you planted. You can't grow a rose from a cactus seed." Alexander Berkman, *Now and After: The ABC of Communist Anarchism* (n.p., 1929), p. 168. Berkman's opening sentence is remarkably similar to one Gandhi used: "The means are the ends in progress."

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From a point of early cooperation, individualist and communist anarchists now deemed each other's label a damning insult to be publicly hurled and publicly denied.

CONCLUSION

The primary conflict between individualist and communist anarchists, in terms of both theory and strategy, centered on two issues relating to violence. First, what was its definition? Second, could it be used as a tactic to achieve social change?

Communist anarchists defined violence in socio-economic terms. Thus, according to their analysis, a state of war already existed between the laboring and capitalist classes. As a logical extension, self-defense was defined in such a manner as to allow communists to attack anyone belonging to the capitalist class on the basis of their class affiliation alone. Since they considered open warfare to already exist, the use of violence to achieve their ends was not only strategic, but necessary.

Individualist anarchists used either natural rights or Stirnerite egoism as the ideological frameworks within which to examine the issue of violence. Both approaches considered the individual to be primary, and defined violence on an individual basis, rather than on a class basis—that is, individuals were responsible on a personal level for any aggression they committed. Even those members of the oppressing class, politicians, were held individually responsible for the specific acts they committed or facilitated, and *Liberty* commonly referred to them by name. Thus, violence against anyone but an individual who had already committed aggression could not be justified.

Moreover, the true source and bulwark of political oppression lay not in the actions of politicians but in the sanction, or obedience, rendered to the political system by society. The state could not be destroyed by eliminating a class of people because the state was, in essence, an idea embraced by society. The idea itself had to be eliminated. As Tucker wrote,

> Our purpose is the abolition, not only of all existing States, but the State itself. . . . It is not a thing that can

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> be especially defined. . . . The State is a principle, a philosophical error in social existence.[55]

The solution: eliminate any sense of legitimacy that the state could claim.

During the twenty-seven year span of *Liberty*, many strategies were advanced to eliminate the philosophical error that was "the state." In the broadest of terms, the strategies fell into four categories: education, civil disobedience, passive resistance, and the creation of parallel institutions.

An example of *Liberty*'s attempts to educate was the Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps. On March 24, 1894, the egoistic Stephen T. Byington announced a strategy of organized letter-writing—usually letters-to-the-editor at daily newspapers—aimed at educating the general public, as well as influential individuals, about the ideas of individualist anarchism. Byington wrote,

> Those who are at all familiar with the Single Tax movement know that it has been much helped by the Single Tax Writing Corps. . . . A number of persons have pledged themselves to write at least one letter a week, in advocacy of the single tax, to such addresses as may be given by the secretary. . . . With each name is usually a statement of the position taken by the man or paper, or a pertinent quotation from some recent public utterance made by him or it.[56]

As a result of the Single Tax Letter-Writing Corps, Byington declared that the issue had been brought before the eyes of the public and important editors on a weekly basis. The same strategy was successfully employed in the service of anarchism.

Civil disobedience was another strategy advocated by the *Liberty* circle, but Tucker advised great caution in employing it. For

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[55]*Liberty* (April 15, 1882): 2–3. Perhaps because of Tucker's philosophical approach to the state—his rejection of the fundamental state rather than merely one manifestation of it—his form of anarchism became known as "philosophical anarchism." One of the most ambitious attempts to define *Liberty*'s approach to anarchism was a 19-installment series of articles entitled "Problems of Anarchism," by William Bailie, which ran in the first eight months of 1893.

[56]"An Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps," *Liberty* (March 24, 1894): 3.

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example, an anarchist should refuse to pay taxes, Tucker believed, only when he or she

> feels exceptionally strong and independent, when his conduct can impair no serious personal obligations, when on the whole he would a little rather go to jail than not, and when his property is in such shape that he can successfully conceal it.[57]

Tucker's advice was based on personal experience. In August, 1875, he had been imprisoned for his Thoreau-like refusal to pay a poll tax, but his protest ended quietly when a friend unilaterally decided to pay the fine. However, Tucker came to believe that civil disobedience was a poor strategy, except when it had an overriding educational value.

A later encounter between Tucker and a poll tax collector on May 17, 1888, illustrates his drift on this particular strategy. The editor paid the tax "under protest" and made an attempt to educate the taxman collecting the fee. Tucker then published an account of the exchange in *Liberty*. When offered a receipt for the $1.00 payment, Tucker refused, saying, "I never take a receipt for money that is stolen from me."[58]

Tucker registered his protest, while behaving in a manner that acknowledged the superiority of the force leveled against him. The reason for his compliance: until and unless a general foundation of anarchistic education had been laid, acts of individual rebellion against unjust law were acts of martyrdom that drained the vitality of a movement and created a backlash of state violence against it. Instead, anarchists should strive vigorously to create "a public sentiment" that would make unjust laws into dead-letter laws because they would meet too much popular resistance to be enforced.

Passive resistance, as opposed to civil disobedience, involved the passive refusal to obey unjust law rather than the direct confrontation with such laws. A prime example of such passive resistance occurred over the issue of trial by jury. When a jury selection

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[57]Benjamin Tucker, *Instead of a Book, by a Man too busy to Write One; A Fragmentary Exposition of Philosophical Anarchism Culled from the Writings of Benj. R. Tucker* (New York: Benj. Tucker, 1893), p. 412.

[58]"A Seed Planted," *Liberty* (Mar 26, 1888): 4.

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law passed in New York State, to which the *Liberty* offices had moved, Tucker was disheartened, commenting, "We are confronted now with a condition, not a theory." He urged readers to adopt the passive resistance strategy employed by Irish rebel Charles Parnell in his campaign against the occupying British: that is, "the policy of loud and steady protest, the policy of embarrassment, hindrance, blockade, and obstruction." He then went on to explain the specific behavior that constituted such resistance in terms of trial by jury.

> If each and every one of you, on being placed in the jury box and before each trial begins, will rise in his place and say to the court: "I most earnestly protest against having to serve on this jury. . . . I serve here only on compulsion and in a spirit of indignant discontent,"

then, Tucker believed, a powerful contribution to anarchistic propaganda could be made.[59]

The strategy of parallel institutions was *Liberty*'s attempt to answer a much-asked question: what would happen to the structure of society if government did not provide essential functions such as courts and defense? Anarchists needed to demonstrate how such essential services could evolve in a voluntary system, and what they might look like. Therefore, Tucker advocated starting a parallel banking system and forming private defense organizations.

In Eltzbacher's *Anarchism*, Byington commented on the defensive associations:

> The defensive associations receive especially frequent mention because of the need of incessantly answering the objection "If we lose the State, who will protect us against ruffians?" but Tucker certainly expects that the defensive association will from the start fill a much smaller sphere in every respect than the present police.[60]

Tucker speculated that more than one defensive association would exist side by side:

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[59]"A Blow at Trial by Jury," *Liberty* (August, 1897): 5.

[60]Paul Eltzbacher, *Anarchism: Exponents of Anarchist Philosophy* trans. Steven T. Byington, ed. James J. Martin (1908; reprint, Plainview, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1960), p. 134.

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> There are many more than five or six insurance companies in England, and it is by no means uncommon for members of the same family to insure their lives and goods against accident or fire in different companies. Why should there not be a considerable number of defensive associations in England in which people, even members of the same family, might insure their lives and goods against murderers or thieves? Defense is a service, like any other service.[61]

Under such a competitive system, the best agency might well reap the majority of business, but it would do so on the quality of its service, not because it enforced a monopoly.

The rejection of violence as a political strategy led the nineteenth-century individualist movement into complex and productive lines of reasoning about alternative strategies by which societal change could be achieved. Given that the oppressive nature of the state has not fundamentally changed during the century since *Liberty*'s voice was stilled, the strategies it advocated may well sound fresh and appealing to modern ears.

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[61]Tucker, *Instead of a Book*, p. 32.

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